WANLEY PENSON;

OR, THE

MELANCHOLY MAN:

A

MISCELLANEOUS HISTORY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Oft by yon wood, now ſmiling as in ſcorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping woful wan like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or croſs'd in hopeleſs love.

At length he reſts upon the lap of earth;
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And MELANCHOLY mark'd him for her own.

GRAY'S ELEGY.

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PREFACE,

BY THE

CURATE.

WHENEVER a circumſtance happens, whether of good or ill fortune, a little out of the track of common events, curioſity is immediately on edge to know all it can of the perſon whom ſuch circumſtance may have more particularly affected: and imagination, raiſed on the occaſion a little above its uſual level, repreſents all the concerns of ſuch perſon, however trifling, as matters of moment. Nor is this to be wondered at, ſince that which we call *importance*, ſtrictly conſidered, is nothing more perhaps than the *flood-mark* of the imagination.

'Twas curioſity, thus excited, that led me, ſome little time after the event which the reader will find recorded in the concluſion of theſe volumes (and of which I was a witneſs), to pay a viſit to the ladies there mentioned, and who were then firſt introduced to my knowledge. The being an acting party in that event was a ſufficient excuſe for my viſit, had I not been honoured with an invitation.

By the favour of thoſe ladies I procured, among much other correſpondence (which, being moſtly but replication, I have thought proper to ſuppreſs), theſe letters which make the bulk of theſe volumes. I brought them home with me; my viſit being too ſhort to admit ſufficient leiſure to read them with the ladies.

On the peruſal, I found ſomething ſo characteriſtic in them, that the thought immediately ſtruck me they might not prove an unacceptable preſent to the public.

But there were many things in them that

that required an illuſtration. Nay, it was neceſſary that the very tenor of them, ſo uncommon and peculiar, ſhould be accounted for: but I had no materials to furniſh ſuch an account; and the ladies living at a diſtance, I could not refer to them ſo eaſily as I wiſhed.

I was one day hinting my idea and my difficulty to Selby, the ſhopkeeper, in the village where I had been ſome months curate, and whom the following pages will render familiar to the reader's memory.

Selby is a good-natured man, and one that has a ſmattering of literature. He begged a ſight of the letters intruſted to my care.—I indulged him.—We peruſed them together—he ſeemed greatly pleaſed as he read; but I was perpetually pointing out obſcurities: on which, at laſt, he ſuddenly ſtept to a cloſet, and brought thence a bundle of papers, which laying on his counter (for we were ſitting in his ſhop), he ſaid, "Sir, I have certainly caught from

theſe letters the infection of that frankneſs which ſo frequently leads their writer to acknowledge his own imprudencies; otherwiſe I could not do what I am now about to do. Can you excuſe my vanity, Sir, if I acknowledge that I had myſelf formed the deſign of being the biographer of the gentleman, whoſe character and mode of thinking, as diſcovered by himſelf in theſe letters, you think may be amuſing to the public?"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, Sir; nor will I conceal my inſtigation thereto. You know Mrs. Barnes, my houſekeeper: ſhe lived long in a family intimately connected with this gentleman; conſequently ſhe was acquainted with moſt of his concerns: and as he was a perſon that ever ſtood high in her eſteem, ſhe wiſhed that

"His name, and life, ſpelt by th' unletter'd muſe,
Might the blank page of elegy ſupply;
And tho' around with ſhapeleſs fancies deck'd,
Procure his fate the tribute of a ſigh."

Wherefore preſſing me to the undertaking, and by little and little working away all my objections to it, I at length ſubmitted to be, in fact, her ſecretary; and behold the conſequence! For from the incidents her memory furniſhed me with, lo! I have blotted all this paper."

Now I ſhould have been more ſurpriſed at this acknowledgment of Selby's, but that I knew Betty (Mrs. Barnes I mean) had fancy enough in her conſtitution to inſpire, and influence enough over her maſter, to engage him to a yet wilder project. Betty was a great *twopenny reader*, who believed all ſhe read, and I dare ſay felt herſelf exalted in the idea that it was in her power to enlarge the catalogue of *true hiſtories*.

"Very good, Mr. Selby," replied I. "But pray have you completed your deſign?"

"By no means Sir," ſaid he: "my hiſtory is like a pair of ſcales without a beam. I had written the *beginning*, and I knew the *end*—but what was to connect theſe extremities, and determine their fitneſs to each other, I was at a loſs to ſupply."

"Nay then, Selby," anſwered I, "I think we are in high luck; for probably theſe letters may fall in very opportunely to fill up the chaſm betwixt theſe extremities: or, to follow your metaphor, may ſupply a ſuitable beam for your ſcales."

"I believe they may," replied he; "and I ſhall be happy to reſign what I have attempted into your hands, if you think you can ſo hitch the whole together, as to give it that aptitude of which I muſt acknowledge you the beſt judge."

"We will however," ſaid I, "examine the ſimilarity of the detachments. But pray, Selby, ſuppoſe you could have completed your hiſtory, as you call it; what did you intend to do with it?"

"Why,

"Why, Sir, I have an acquaintance a bookſeller: I intended to publiſh it; for Mrs. Barnes led me into the opinion that Mr. Penſon's adventures"———

"Adventures, Selby!" interrupted I; "why I was not aware of any thing occurring in the ſubject of our diſcourſe any way like what that epithet implies. But prithee now, was it thy intention to inſtance Mrs. Barnes's perſuaſions as an excuſe for thy turning author?"

"Humph!——Why no."

"But had the neceſſity of making an apology to the public for employing thy pen otherwiſe than in inſcribing Debtor and Ditto, never occurred to thee?"

"Yes," ſaid he; "and I concluded that the times had furniſhed me with a very admiſſible one."

"In what?"

"The ſhop tax*, Sir."

* It appears from hence that this converſation paſſed at leaſt a twelvemonth ſince.

The

The electrician, thought I, draws fire from water; and vanity is never at a loſs from whence to extract an excuſe.

But on examination, I found Selby's papers leſs contemptible than I expected; ſo much ſo, that in fact they fell little ſhort of ſuch an introduction as I could have wiſhed to the aforementioned letters, whoſe contents, though the ſentiment pleaſed me, I could previouſly read but as an enigma. Wherefore as ſuch an introduction I have preſented Selby's labours to the reader, only making here and there a few alterations in the ſtyle, in order to give the whole ſomething of an air of fameneſs.

Thus, by the ſhopkeeper's aſſiſtance, and the appearing now and then myſelf, like a chorus on the ſtage, had I at length—originally for my own, but ultimately for the amuſement of the public—eked out the hiſtory of the Melancholy Man: and following the bias of my own ſenſibility, I ſhould probably have continued, even to the moment

ment of publication, to have flattered myſelf that the treat I had prepared might at leaſt have gone down, without diſguſting thoſe for whom I intended it; had it not been for what follows, and which convinced me I had calculated from falſe data.

The tranſcript was already modified—I had taken it to Selby to run it over with him. The ſhare he had in it demanded ſuch a compliment. We were employed in the peruſal, when Gage the exciſeman entered. He had formerly been ſuperintendant of an academy, but inadvertencies ———But what have I to do with his inadvertencies? We were neither of us unacquainted with each other, conſequently Selby and I made no ſecret either of our employment or deſign.

Man is never more frank than when he is ſatisfied with himſelf. I had completed my tranſcript to my ſatisfaction, and I was pleaſed that I had undertaken it: I expected

too

too that every one elſe would be pleaſed; wherefore, little leſs than confident of meeting his commendation, I demanded of the exciſeman, after he had turned over page after page, for an hour, or more, how he approved.

He looked mighty wiſe.

"*Creditur*," ſaid he, "*ex medio quia res arceſſit, habere ſudoris minimum.*" And truly there is not much expected from this ſpecies of compoſition; but I am afraid this falls ſhort even of what is expected.

I remember once, as I was paſſing the ſtreets of a country town, where I then reſided, to have had a bowl of cold water daſhed accidentally into my boſom. Perhaps the reader, too, may have in the courſe of his life met with ſuch an accident himſelf: if he has, he will be able in ſome degree to figure to himſelf what were my ſenſations, on hearing this reply of the exciſeman's.

Selby

Selby ſtared at me, as much as to ſay—"Ah! Mr. Curate, how is this?"——I believe, for my own part, I looked very fooliſh. However, I ſoon recovered ſufficient preſence of mind to demand whether he objected to the *whole*, or was only diſpleaſed with *certain parts:* for I recollected to have met with ſome who, having found what they thought a blemiſh in a work, would mark it with ſuch an unqualified cenſure, as to put every beauty that might be adduced, out of countenance.

——"Publica materies privati juris erit,
Nec circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,"

Muttered he; then continued—"Why, as to the whole, I would not decide on it: but look here, Sir—and here—what trifling! Theſe pages however ſhould be cut out."

"Bleſs thy ſenſorium!" thought I; for he pointed to paſſages that ſtruck me as ſome of the prettieſt in the whole work: namely, thoſe where ſenſibility is quickened by

by trifling incidents. I was vexed at the inflexibility of his nerve: but he is an exciſeman, thought I, and determines every thing by his *gauging rod.* He conſults his *brain*, not his *boſom.*—My pride too was piqued. What would Selby have concluded had I ſuffered my critical ſkill to be ſuperſeded by that of an exciſeman! Nay, thought I, whilſt *words* can ſuſtain me, I'll not give ground. Selby ſhall ſee I can play *off* objections, as faſt as the exciſeman can play them *on*: wherefore, "Excuſe me, Mr. Gage," ſaid I; "great things may create aſtoniſhment; but trifles can touch the heart. Few can ſympathiſe with great concerns, becauſe few experience them; but every one is ſenſible to the occurrences of daily life; even thoſe who affect to deſpiſe every thing as mean that is not uncommon. Beſides, 'tis more from *diminutives* than oſtenſibles, that *character* is to be extracted. Mankind in their Sunday clothes endeavour to be of the faſhion, to be as much like

like one another as poſſible; but if you would know their different caſts, you muſt view them in their deſhabille, in their every day dreſs. However," continued I (for Gage began to look broody), "ſince we are entered on the diſquiſition, you will oblige me by making no reſerve of your objections: I ſhould like to *hear* them, though we might not happen to *agree* in every particular. Have you more of them?"

"Several," ſaid he.

"Out with them," ſaid I.

"In the firſt place, you have taken the liberty to alter names, I ſee; and had you extended this liberty a little farther, it might have reached to an improvement, and added a kind of dignity to the work, which now it wants. Not *one title*, Sir, in the whole dramatis perſonæ!"

"Nor do I wiſh there ſhould," interrupted I. "We have already a ſufficient *Novel Peerage*. I rather take it that works of the kind of this before us are better as pictures

tures of middle than of high life. Great names become great hiſtories: let them embelliſh that of their country. But for the amuſement of a leiſure hour, why may not plain *Mr.* furniſh as much entertainment as *My Lord?* For, beſides that, the character can be more univerſally ſubſtituted (and unleſs the reader can himſelf ſubſtitute or enter into the character, he cannot properly enjoy it), pictures of humble life appear to me to be calculated to anſwer the better end; ſince, by conveying an idea of its difficulties and diſtreſſes to the great, it may incite them to interfere, and relieve. But however the humble may ſympathiſe in the unhappineſſes of the exalted, his humanity muſt, alas! expire childleſs; for he is not endued with powers to bring forth aſſiſtance. Yet, after all, Sir, to pleaſe you, and others who may happen to think like you, I would accede to the introduction of a *title*, did our drama afford a character capable of ſuſtaining it.

But

But there is only one whom it would any way fit; and as by throwing out almoſt all his letters, as ſuperfluous in this collection, I have left him almoſt uncharacteriſed, I cannot think of coroneting ſuch inſignificance."

This half conceſſion ſeemed a little to reconcile the muſcles of Gage's countenance, who however thus replied:

"The faults of a favourite are always but trifles in the eye of the favourer, but

——Hæ nugæ ſeria ducent
In mala, deriſum ſemel, exceptumque ſiniſtre. Hor.

However, to paſs by this, ſince I find you are determined to maintain that whatever is, is right—I ſhould be glad to hear how you will reconcile with the "ſimplex et unum" of Maſter Horace the retaining (of all things improper to be retained in a publication intended but to play with the fancy) thoſe ſerious unſuitable letters on Moravianiſm."

"Sir," ſaid I, "I ſhall leave the ſame maſter's 'utile et dulce' to reconcile it; af-

ter having ſaid, what I have often thought, that an advantage may be made of the taſte of the age for novels, to the advancement of uſeful knowledge. Hiſtory and geography, nay even philoſophy and divinity, would readily ſlide into their compoſitions; of this we have *ſome*, though but few examples: and I ſhould not think a diſſemination of the rudiments of ſome of the polite arts impracticable by their means.—Names have a great influence on the human mind. We can ſupport the fatigue of what we call play, with much greater ſpirit than we can neceſſary labour. A ſcientific title would deter nine out of ten common readers from looking into the book. But I have ſeldom found that knowledge diveſted of its magiſterial ſolemnity, and introduced as a ſocial companion, ever abaſhed the company."

"Well—but, Sir," ſaid Gage, "your pardon for the interruption—but how can a deſcription of Moravianiſm be called *uſeful* knowledge?"

"What-

"Whatever," replied I, "relates to the manners of men, may, I think, bear that title, as we know not among whom the viciſſitudes of life may caſt us. As to the ſect you advert to, who are pretty numerous it ſeems in ſome parts of the empire, and who have many proſelytes in theſe kingdoms, they abound ſo in peculiarities, have had ſo much ſaid *for* and againſt them, and after all, like the myſterious free maſons, are ſo little known, that I was pleaſed to meet with an account of them which wore the countenance of truth and candour: for all the accounts I had previouſly met with, appeared to have been written by their opponents (and conſequently, we may ſuppoſe, not in the true ſpirit of liberality), or by themſelves, to whoſe relation, being in general but their own panegyric, perhaps the moſt generous mind may be excuſed if it do not give the utmoſt extent of credit. But Penſon appears to have written from knowledge, not hearſay—to in-

form his friend, and not to flatter or vilify any party; for he applauds where he can, treats reſpectfully even what he diſapproves, and only ſmiles where he cannot help it."

"You ſhould have been a lawyer, Sir," cried the exciſeman; "the moſt deſperate cauſe would not then have wanted an advocate.—But let us ſee"——And he now turned over page after page haſtily, dipping here and there, juſt for connection's ſake: I *ſhould* have ſaid, like a man who was culling a poſy, but that his look informed me, if a roſe preſented itſelf, he would put it by; and, though he got ſcratched in the attempt, rather gather the barren brier, ſo he could but have it to uſe as a rod. Having turned over to the end, he cloſed the tranſcript; and ſhaking his head, "Faith, Sir," ſaid he, "you muſt excuſe me, but 'twill never do. Why it is defective in the moſt indiſpenſable of all points—it has no moral."

I in-

I inſtinctively rubbed my eyes.—The deuce! thought I, why ſurely I am not awake all this while!

"Moral, Sir? no moral, do you ſay? why 'tis too much moral, 'tis all moral."

"Pſhaw! pſhaw!" returned he, "beg your pardon: but a man of your erudition cannot be ignorant that a work of this kind ſhould have a general moral, reſulting from the whole; but I believe it will puzzle even your ingenuity to extract one hence."

This puſh, I own, a little ſtaggered me; and I was on the point of receding, when a moment's recollection brought me aſſiſtance.

"In theſe light compoſitions, Mr. Gage," ſaid I, "*I* ſhould not look for ſuch a ſtrict adherence to poetic rule; and I think I could inſtance many writers who have let this rule entirely eſcape them. But, if you inſiſt on it, I think I can extract as good a moral from *this*, as can poſſibly be extracted from a piecemeal work which its writer

never deſigned to be put together. And, to venture my opinion, perhaps this is not the firſt performance that has had a moral fitted to it which never entered its writer's imagination."

"You raiſe my curioſity, Sir."

"I will haſte to ſatisfy it. The acknowledged intention of all the novels that have ever been publiſhed, has been to refine mankind, to quicken their ſenſibility, and poliſh their ſentiments; but is it not poſſible, in all theſe years, this poliſhing may have been laboured farther than the materials will well bear? An eye too much employed in nice diſtinctions may grow too tender. Now, if ſtill to increaſe ſuſceptibility, be the general tendency of novels, and there be a probability that this may be carried to an exceſs, would not an antidote to their effects be in ſome caſes acceptable?"

The exciſeman laughed.—"Surely, Sir," ſaid he, "you can never recommend the

Melan-

Melancholy Man as an antidote to an exceſs of ſenſibility!"

"Why not? To cure a ſqueamiſh ſtomach, the phyſician will ſometimes increaſe that ſqueamiſhneſs to a degree of exoneration. You aſked for a moral, and I will give you an apologue.

"A certain man ſucceeding to the inheritance of an old gothic dwelling, employed himſelf intently in endeavouring to render it more airy and pleaſant. He thinned the walls, and he enlarged the windows. The cheerful ſun ſmiled in the apartments, and rendered them comfortable. He obſerved the ſucceſs of his endeavour, and reſolved yet to improve his deſign: wherefore he continued to thin the walls, and to enlarge the windows; till, of a heavy impenetrable abode, he had rendered it ſo light, that darkneſs had no corner left to hide in; and ſo airy, that the vernal breeze almoſt breathed its fragrance through its ſlight muralities; whence, in the ſoft ſeaſon, no habi-

habitation could be more deſirable. But, alas! where the vernal breeze could pervade, the wintry blaſt could pierce; and ſo much was the ſtructure weakened by refinement, that, when the ſtorms blew, its inhabitant trembled leſt it ſhould be ſhaken about his ears."

"Better you prefixed this apologue to your tranſcript; as from thence the reader may be able to extract a moral, which otherwiſe he would never think of extracting from the work itſelf."

"Nay," ſaid I, "if you think ſuch a moral unnaturally adduced, or unneceſſary to the preſent age, whoſe endemia, after all the efforts of novel writers, may perhaps be rather a rigidity of nerve, than too great a ſoftneſs, perhaps it may be poſſible (as medicines calculated for different diſorders can be extracted from the ſame drug) that from the ſubject before us may be drawn a moral to an effect diametrically oppoſite.

A friend

A friend of mine and myſelf were once in company with a phyſician; the conſequence was (as I believe is the general conſequence on ſuch occaſions), that, though we were neither of us really ill, we were notwithſtanding tempted to enquire if it were not poſſible to make ourſelves better. The little complaints of my friend originated from a hot and dry conſtitution."

'Uſe the warm bath,' ſaid the phyſician.

My conſtitution was the direct contrary; and a frequent chilneſs in the extremities was the conſequence.

'Uſe the warm bath,' ſaid the phyſician.

'Strange advice this, doctor!'

'Not at all,' ſaid he. '*Your* conſtitution (ſpeaking to my friend) needs relaxation: the extra heat of the warm bath will effect it. But yours (ſpeaking to me) has not ſufficient force in its internal ſprings to throw a due vitality to the extreme parts; therefore it muſt be courted forward, by thawing and ſoftening its paſſages.'

"The

"The *Melancholy Man* is certainly not a character for cloſe imitation: yet may not his exquiſiteneſſes ſerve as a warm bath for a heart too little ſuſceptible, and court into circulation its ſtagnant ſenſibilities? I acknowledge that character is generally drawn either for imitation or deteſtation. But there are ſome one can admire without a wiſh to imitate; and others where one muſt blame the very thing that prejudices one in their favour. Perhaps there are none intereſt the heart like the latter; and conſequently, perhaps, there are none better adapted as a vehicle for moral ſentiment."

"I have read of extracting ſun-beams from a cucumber," cried the exciſeman; "and to extract a moral hence——But I will not draw a parallel, Sir; for I ſee there is no fault but what may be ſophiſticated into a beauty."

"And by the ſame rule," replied I, "there is no beauty but may be conſtrued as a defect.—And now, Sir," continued I, "give me

me leave to obſerve, that, had your objections been confined to particular paſſages, I would have conceded to their alteration, though, to have done that, had involved the deſtruction of what myſelf might have thought a beauty. But as your objections riſe from 'parts to the *whole*,' I muſt e'en let take its chance as it is; with the hope that ſome readers may receive pleaſure, where the endeavour to pleaſe has failed to give it you. And indeed I have ſeen enough, both of books and men, to know that one reader will dwell delighted on what another will ſkip over as unintereſting; as one appetite will reliſh what another will loath. Whilſt there are ſome, both readers and eaters, who, ſacrificing every thing to faſhion, approve only what is the taſte of the times.

Theſe latter (and we have too many inſtances of ſuch mutability) will condemn to-day without mercy, and a twelvemonth hence applauded without reaſon.

Others there are who, though not devoid of judgment, comment only to ſhew their wit. And as good-nature is always looked on as a fool, theſe, to be as far removed as poſſible from that character, are always finding or making a fault againſt which to play off their own cleverneſs.

A *little wit*, mixed with a large portion of *ill-nature*, will ſerve to make a glare; as a little ſilver diſſolved in aqua fortis will ſerve to whiten a deal of indifferent metal; and, like the latter too, will corrode and injure wherever applied. And this I take to be——"

But the exciſeman did not ſtay to hear my concluſion. Whether tired or offended I know not; but he ſuddenly left me, muttering as he went—

Si defendere delictum quam vertere malles,
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam ſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares.

THE

THE MELANCHOLY MAN.

PART I.

SELBY'S HISTORY.

WEARISOME are the village hours unenlivened by converſation. Thought may fall aſleep over its own cogitations, ere an incident occur to quicken it to a new reflection. Hence it is, as all happineſs is moſt deſired where leaſt attainable, that the villager ſo covets a companion on a rainy day, or a winter evening: and to ſupply this want of incident by the communication of ideas, the idlers of the neighbourhood not unfrequently made my ſhop their lounging-place: for a ſhop, if it be of any reputation (and mine was eſteemed

a capital one), anſwers to the villager the moſt eſſential purpoſe that a coffee houſe does to the citizen. There he depoſits what little news he can collect, and expects in return to be gratified with a canvaſs of that collected by others.

One evening, ſome little time ſince, Mr. Dobſon, our vicar, and Mr. Barclaim, an attorney, who had lately come to reſide in our pariſh, ſtrolling in, as they often did, to talk over the news-paper, and ſettle the affairs of the nation, I aſked them, together with a Mr. D—, a tradeſman of Briſtol, with whom I have dealings, and who happened then to be with me, to ſmoke a pipe; which being accepted, politics, according to cuſtom, was the ſubject immediately ſtarted. But we had not proceeded far in our examination of the conduct of miniſters, ere our inveſtigations were interrupted by a poor woman who came of an errand.

While I was ſerving her, ſhe produced a paper folded up, and deſired me to inform her

her of its ſignificance, telling me it was ſomething ſhe had picked up juſt by the Grange Stile. I opened it; the outſide of the paper was dirty, but the inſide was clean: I found it to be ſome manuſcript verſes. I told her what it was, and handed the paper to the vicar, who, on my ſaying it was a poem, ſeemed eager to ſee it, for we were all in the ſhop. Meantime the woman, diſappointed I ſuppoſe in her expectations, went away.

The vicar, ſo ſoon as he had read a line or two, began to draw up the corners of his noſe, frequently exclaiming, as he proceeded, "Trumpery! nonſenſe!" and a copious ſelection of terms of the like import: which adding to the lawyer's curioſity, already excited (for an ill name procures attention as well as a good one), he deſired to know the contents.

"It is not worth your knowledge," returned the parſon; "'twere time loſt to peruſe it."

"Yet you peruſe it," rejoined the lawyer.

"Ay, in hopes of finding one word of ſenſe in it," ſaid the parſon; "but I loſe my labour."

"That is a ſtrange performance indeed," replied the lawyer, "that has not one ſenſible word; why I never ſaw a halfpenny ballad but it contained ſome meaning!"

"Meaning!" cried the parſon, rather tartiſh, "what ſignifies a meaning, if one cannot diſcover it? Half the things that are written are compoſed in ſuch an unjointed manner, that 'tis worth more to diſcover their meaning, than it would be to tranſcribe them."

"You are a claſſical man," replied the lawyer, "and on this ſubject may advance what you pleaſe; but I ſhould be loath to ſay what you have ſaid, leſt my underſtanding ſhould be called in queſtion, and I ſhould diſcover my own dulneſs in charging a writer with want of perſpicuity. Maſter Selby," continued he, calling humorouſly

ouſly to me, "put a dull writer and a good reader into one ſcale, and a dull reader and good writer into the other, and ſet me down the difference."

This ſally excited a laugh from the Briſtolian: but the parſon's colour flaſhed in a moment to a deep ſcarlet; and I believe he would have replied in a phraſe not very ſilken, but juſt then appeared at the door a youngiſh man, in dark clothes (I ſhould rather have ſaid, one not old, for he certainly had left his boyiſh years far behind him), who, advancing with rather a diffident air, begged to be informed what place he was in? whether there was an inn near? and how far he was from Bath? to which place he ſaid he was going; but being benighted on the common, he had in conſequence loſt his way, and wandered into this village.

He was dreſſed very genteel, but not at all gay; and though his behaviour was very far from what we call ſmart, yet there

was ſomething in it that convinced me he was no ſtranger to politeneſs: at leaſt if one in my ſtation may be ſuppoſed capable of judging of true politeneſs; by which term I would not be underſtood to mean a ſet of poſtures, and a ſtring of compliments; but the art of rendering ourſelves pleaſing to others, and others pleaſed with themſelves. I have ſaid, his air was diffident: but it was only ſuch a diffidence as ſeemed to tell one, "I ſhould be ſorry unwittingly to incur your diſpleaſure, and wittingly I will not."—He was talliſh, and rather thin; his countenance had a caſt of melancholy, which his hair, that hung waving on his ſhoulders, rather added to; but a gentle diſpoſition was equally conſpicuous in his features. I believe, ſome in the company entertained not ſuch a favourable opinion of him as I did; for, after the firſt look, the parſon did not ſeem to think him worth a ſecond. He concluded, I ſuppoſe, that the ſtranger was a perſon of no account, by his travelling

travelling on foot; for, that he travelled on foot, his dreſs and walking-cane ſufficiently indicated. The attorney indeed eyed him critically; but the Briſtolian only moved from his ſeat on his entrance.

To the ſtranger's enquiries I replied, that the name of the village he then was in was L——; that there was no inn nearer than two miles; that there was a little alehouſe about a mile diſtant, but I could not recommend it; and that Bath was diſtant ſeven miles: to this I added an entreaty that he would ſit down and reſt himſelf a little; which the Briſtolian ſeconded with a courteſy that ſeemed the child of good-nature.

The ſtranger thanked us in a ſtyle more frank than flowery; and, ſitting down, added, "I am indeed ſomewhat fatigued. I intended to have reached Bath this evening, which I think I could have done with eaſe: but about two hours ago, having ſtruck out of the high road, to ramble along

a meadow that ran parallel with it, I heard a ruſtling among ſome buſhes at a little diſtance; and making up to it, found it proceeded from an aſs fallen on its back into a ditch that parted the meadow from a common. The poor thing groaned ſo piteouſly, and his looks ſeemed ſo ſadly to crave my aſſiſtance, that I went back to a cottage I ſaw about half a mile off; and there, after ſome time, got a man to come and help me in relieving the poor animal."

"And pray was Mr. Jack ſo polite as to thank you for your pains?" ſaid the lawyer (a little ſarcaſtically, I believe; and I think the ſtranger underſtood him ſo, for) he bluſhed, and only replied with a deal of modeſty, "All it could, Sir, I believe it did."

"Ay, ay, lobbed his long ears at you: but, Sir, excuſe my curioſity; certainly you have not travelled far, as you are on foot?" ſaid the lawyer.

"Yes, Sir," replied the ſtranger, "I have

have travelled to day from G——: but, as I ſet little value on my time, I chooſe rather to walk than ride, as I can by this means indulge myſelf in tracing any romantic ſcene, or ſequeſtered thicket, that may chance to ſtrike my view; and my buſineſs is ſuch, that, wander where I will, I cannot be much out of my way." "Why then," rejoined the lawyer, "to commiſerate your misfortune in having wandered hither to-night, would be an inſult."

The ſtranger again bluſhed; and I diſcovered he was not quick at repartee. However, he preſently replied with a mild accent, "Why indeed, I ſhould not have thought myſelf unfortunate in happening on this village, had it but afforded me an inn for my accommodation: but," continued he, "I ſhall not repine at trifles; and I ſhall yet, fatigued as I am, eſteem myſelf happy if you will do me the favour to commend me to ſome perſon who will ſhew me the way to an inn."

"Well,

"Well but, Sir," cried the lawyer, who was determined not to loſe his joke, "ſince you ſuffer ſo much fatigue to-night on account of your generoſity to an aſs, I think you ought to finiſh the adventure. Return to-morrow and ſeek him; for when he ſhall know what difficulties he occaſioned you, certainly his gratitude will not let you walk a ſtep farther."

This ſpeech, I ſaw, conſiderably hurt the ſtranger. But after a ſhort pauſe he replied: "Sir, you are pleaſed to be merry:—but I am perfectly ſatisfied both with what I did for the aſs, and with his gratitude; for I perſuade myſelf, at the moment I relieved him, he would have rewarded me with the fineſt thiſtle on the heath, and not have grudged me my repaſt."

The lawyer laughed out at this conceit; exclaiming, "A fine reward truly!" The ſtranger too ſmiled, and ſaid, "Water cannot riſe higher than its fountain, Sir, nor the gratitude of an aſs above his ideas."

"Ideas

"Ideas of an aſs!" repeated the lawyer, laughing yet louder:—but the ſtranger, not ſeeming to regard him, now ſtood up, and addreſſing me, begged, as the evening was haſtily advancing, and as probably it would not be eaſy to procure a perſon to ſhew him the way to the inn I had mentioned, that I would be juſt ſo kind as to deſcribe to him the road thither.

I don't know how it was—but either the oddity of character this ſtranger had given items of, or the ſimplicity of his behaviour, or the penſive caſt of his features, or all theſe combined, influenced me ſo, that I could not ſuffer him to depart without preſſing him firſt to refreſh himſelf with what the houſe afforded; and herein the Briſtolian again ſeconded me: but I believe our entreaty would have availed nothing, had not the clouds, which had been louring all the afternoon, began to diſcharge themſelves pretty profuſely. This induced the gentleman to reſume his ſeat, hoping the violence

lence of the ſhower would ſoon be over. He however would not be prevailed on to accept any refreſhment, except a glaſs of the beer which the parſon and lawyer were enjoying with their pipes.

All this while old Dobſon, the vicar, ſat with his eyes fixed on the paper I had given him, ſeemingly regardleſs of every thing that paſſed, or rather affecting a ſuperiority to the company and their concerns, probably to impreſs the ſtranger with an idea of his importance. But Barclaim, the attorney, who is an enemy to ſilence, perceiving perhaps that the ſtranger was not eager to engage in a game of bandy-word, and perhaps too reflecting that it were rude to teaſe an unknown perſon with impertinencies, no ſooner ſaw that the company were not likely ſoon to divide, than he re-attacked the parſon on the ſubject of the verſes, deſiring to know if they had yet rewarded his ſearch by affording him a ſenſible word. To which the parſon replied,

with

with the uſual motion of his noſe, that ſince the firſt peruſal he had given up the hope of ſuch a diſcovery. "Nay then," replied Barclaim, "if the nut be too hard for your teeth, why do you keep mumbling it ſo greedily?"

"Too hard for my teeth!" replied the other haughtily;" I aſſure you, Sir, this thing is too contemptible to induce me to ſearch for its kernel, if it have any; and my attention had only ſlipped aſide a moment, to wonder how a perſon, who has not had the happineſs of a univerſity education, can have the vanity to attempt to compoſe verſes."

"Hey-day!" replied the lawyer, "happineſs!—univerſity education!—vanity to compoſe verſes!—Why either you or I, Mr. Parſon, are ſtrangely out in our opinions! I always thought a fine fancy was more neceſſary to a poet than a univerſity education."

At the cloſe of this reply the vicar twiſted himſelf

himſelf about in his chair with a quickneſs of motion as though ſomething had ſtung him; and the ſtranger, who ſeemed by his attention to be eagerly waiting the iſſue of the debate (the parſon's countenance not indicating a ſpeedy reſponſe), interjoined in a very ſoftened tone, addreſſing himſelf to the man of law thus:

"Perhaps, Sir, had the gentleman been allowed a minute's recollection, he would have amended his expreſſion, and ſaid a claſſical, inſtead of a univerſity education."

The parſon now once more looked on the ſtranger; but with ſuch a look as I once ſaw a ſtupid fellow caſt on a dudman which was ſet up in a garden to frighten the birds; and which, whilſt the fellow was contemplating its great wig, turning on a pivot with the next guſt of wind, ſuddenly ſtruck him a ſlap on the face with its wooden arm. —His look was a mixture of ſurprize and pique:—but the attorney allowed him little time for recollection; for, repeating what

the ſtranger had advanced, he cried, "Ay, ay, that is your meaning, Mr. Dobſon, undoubtedly; a claſſical education is indeed nearer the point."

"Claſſical!" replied the vicar peeviſhly, "pray where is the difference? Are not the expreſſions ſynonimous?"

"Your pardon there, Sir," ſaid Barclaim; I muſt deny you that:—ſeveral of our choiceſt Engliſh authors, whoſe works prove their education to have been claſſical, never had the happineſs, as you call it, of being inaugurated at a univerſity. I will only mention two poets, Pope and Gay. But, Sir," continued he, "though you gentlemen of the univerſity value yourſelves on the regularity of your education, I am of the abſurd opinion that, to the forming a poet, an apt invention is more neceſſary than even claſſical knowledge. I will not here mention Shakſpeare, becauſe his erudition is doubtful; but will reſt my proof entirely with the ladies, ſome of whom, without any pre-

pretenſion to that kind of knowledge which is ſtrictly called claſſical, have produced compoſitions that have extorted a plaudit even from the ſparing hand of learned criticiſm."

"Woonds!" cried the parſon, haſtily turning to the lawyer, "why don't you tell me in plain terms that the learned world are all fools, or that a regular education is but ſtilts for a dull fellow, and unneceſſary to ſuch a naturally-aſpiring genius as, perhaps, yours, or the pitiful author's of this paltry thing:"—and with theſe words he flung the occaſion of the diſpute on the table, with an air of ſovereign contempt: when the ſtranger, ſeeing him rather irritated, again, with a deal of diffident good-nature, attempted to be heard; obſerving that, though he did not know the grounds of their debate, yet he felt himſelf intereſted to bring it to an amicable concluſion, as while it exiſted it ſeemed to ſuſpend that cordiality which he ever wiſhed

to

to ſee ſubſiſt between neighbours. "I believe, gentlemen," continued he, "you will allow that we often obſtinately defend notions which we are by no means poſitive in, merely becauſe our companion has inſiſted, perhaps in too unceremonious a manner, that we ought to relinquiſh them. Look you now," ſaid he; "if either of you were to ſtart up, and, collaring me, demand of me this broken pipe, which certainly I eſteem of no value, inſtead of complying with your demand, I ſhould naturally endeavour to diſengage your fingers from my throat, and perhaps break your head with my cane; but, if you aſked me civilly for it, I ſhould grant it you, with a wiſh that it were a better thing. That reverend gentleman," continued he, "will, I dare ſay, readily acknowledge that a fine fancy is the principal requiſite neceſſary to form a poet; but then, on the other hand, a claſſical education, it muſt be granted, is alſo neceſſary to form a good one."

"You muſt ſay *univerſity* education," interrupted Barclaim, "or your caveat will be inadmiſſible."

"A univerſity education, Sir," replied the ſtranger, "cannot I think be otherwiſe than claſſical; though it does not perhaps follow that a claſſical one can be obtained nowhere but in a univerſity."

"Excuſe me, Sir," ſaid the attorney, "univerſities have their unprofitables.—Place a pig in a cage for ſeven years, yet 'twill never learn to whiſtle."

"Pig in a cage!" repeated the parſon angrily; "give me leave to tell you, Sir, your conceits are very coarſe."

"And give me leave to tell you, in return," ſaid the attorney, laughing, "that yours are very conceit*ed*. But come, Sir, excuſe me, ſince you have ſtarted the ſubject of conceit, pray do you recollect thoſe verſes in our laſt newſpaper, which—But no, I dare ſay you did not notice them; for, if my memory be not unfaithful, their poſt mark

was

was not Univerſitatis. However, you muſt give me leave to repeat one ſtanza; and, as I am not fond of repreſſing whatever riſes uppermoſt, you may conſider this, if you will, as an eructation proceeding from indigeſtion.

Conceit, like madneſs, ſwells the mind
Above the level of mankind:
Bloats it, like a bubble thin,
Pompous without, but void within.
Room! room! th' irrev'rend touch forbear!
Bubbles, touch'd but by a hair,
Preſto! ſpirt—and——nothing are."

The parſon was now evidently worked up to a pitch: but he ſaw it was no uſe to reſent what was delivered only as a joke; wherefore,

"I ſhall only repeat," ſaid he "that you have impudence enough to form the coarſeſt alluſions, and inſolence enough to utter them."

"Nay, good Sir, now," returned the other in his uſual ſtrain, "pray now don't

ſwell ſo very big: allow me a little elbow room, and I won't touch you, though by my life I love to ſee you ſpirt."

This was not mending the matter, but the parſon did not deign a reply: and the lawyer, who had held in his hand, during the latter part of the altercation, the poem the parſon had flung on the table, now began to peruſe it. Whilſt the Briſtolian, taking the opportunity of a moment's ſilence, obſerved to Barclaim, that he had in his opinion diſcovered more ſpirit than prudence in commencing an engagement for an unknown thing; adding, however, that he hoped a knowledge of the object contended for would not make him repent the contention.

The lawyer, inſtead of anſwering him, only gave him a wink; and directing his diſcourſe again to the parſon, ſaid—"Juſt as I thought, Sir; you ſhut your eyes, and then declare you can't ſee. Now I appeal to the company whether or not theſe verſes

verſes are ſo deſpicably penned as not to be underſtood; pray liſten:

Waking ſolace, ſoothing dream!
  Cauſe and cordial of deſpair!
Love!—'tis love inſpires the theme,
  And modulates the air.
'Tis love which, thrilling thro' each vein,
Now prompts th' impetuous, now the tender ſtrain;
  Itſelf the burthen of the ſong,
Reining the wild notes as they wing along.
    Melinda, liſt!
  Melinda! how my ſpirits bound!
Not Zephyr, when this roſy morn he kiſs'd,
  Breath'd ſuch freſhening vigour round,
  As thro' my boſom breathes that ſound:
    O liſt, Melinda dear!
Dearer than all—but nature's all—can give
To mark how *very* dear, no expletive:
    Yet hear,
Whilſt I th' all-powerful ſentiment define,
Its ſpring, its progreſs, and its fervors trace;
Tell how it glow'd in this fond heart of mine,
  When firſt, with ſweet ſurpriſe,
I ſaw it quicken in Melinda's eyes,
And ſpread its bluſhing bloſſom on her face.

There now, gentlemen," continued

Barclaim, "can either of you gueſs the drift of theſe verſes—Mr. Dobſon here out of the queſtion, for he owns he cannot?"

"O yes," ſaid the Briſtolian, "'tis a love ſong; but the rhymes come in, methinks, rather cramply."

"There, look you now, Mr. Vicar," cried Barclaim; "now own, ſince you will be a learned man, that the quillets of learning can confuſe the underſtanding, as much as the haut-gouts of luxury can vitiate the taſte."

"'Tis da—da— (I would not have the reader ſuppoſe that the vicar, choleric as he was, here ſtumbled againſt a naughty word; I rather take it to have been that ſtammer incident to haſty ſpeakers: for, having recovered breath)—"'Tis curſed ſtuff," ſaid he; "but go on, I ſhall have you preſently."

The lawyer accordingly read on a few lines; when, having to proceed to a freſh page, he pauſed, and ſeemed at a loſs.

"Here

"Here is ſome defect here, I believe," ſaid he; "I cannot indeed reconcile this with the foregoing."

"I believe not," ſaid the parſon, and began to raiſe himſelf ſtill ſtiffer in his chair, pleaſed with the idea of the lawyer's nonplus.

But the ſtranger, who had ſat for ſome time ſeemingly uneaſy, now approached Barclaim, and begging pardon for looking over him, obſerved, that he thought, by the fold of the paper, that the complete poem had conſiſted of eight pages, that he held only the outſide folio, and that the four intervening pages were miſſing.

The lawyer inſtantly acknowledged the pertinence of the obſervation; adding, that the parſon, having peruſed the copy ſo long, muſt have made the ſame, if his ill-nature would have ſuffered him. "But, Sir," continued he, ſpeaking to the vicar, "I ſuppoſe you were too well pleaſed with the opportunity of cenſuring, to admit the poſſibility of a ſalvo."

 "Salvo!"

"Salvo!" interrupted the parſon, with his uſual contempt of countenance.

"Salvo, ay!" returned the other haſtily; "why, conſidering it as a mutilation, I ſhould not wonder if it were acknowledged by one of your fellow-collegians, Mr. Dobſon."

"Eternal teaſer," ſaid the vicar, with as much importance as his utterance was capable of, "why, what do you think of my diſcernment?"

"Think, Sir?" replied the laughing lawyer, "why, that none are more liable to be deceived than thoſe who think themſelves ſuperior to deception; and as to this fragment, if the univerſity did not produce it (which is a matter yet undetermined), the author, whoever he be, has however this conſolation, that it has produced as bad. But," continued he, "there are ſome of you ſcholaſtic gents, who having ſpent all your lives in learning's lumber room, perhaps to little purpoſe, are ſo jealous leſt any,

any, who but occaſionally turn in there, ſhould be more happy than yourſelves in the arrangement of trifles they may there collect from the confuſion, that the moment they meddle, though but with a plaything, you cry, 'Stop thief!' and ſentencing them like Ephraimites, on the unimportant pronunciation of their Shibboleth, knock them down with your dialectic conſequence. But, to drop the figure," added he, in a more ſerious tone, addreſſing himſelf to the company in general, "I have known, gentlemen, little eſſays condemned by theſe word-rangers only for a falſe punctuation; if a falſe conſtruction appeared, then there was no hope of mercy; or, if in the negligence of copying, a phraſe happened to be omitted or miſplaced, though the general tenor of the whole were otherwiſe not cenſurable, it was evidence ſufficient; the author was an egregious blunderer. Miſtakes and inadvertencies are the aliment of the little critic. 'Tis in ſearch of theſe he

toils

toils over page after page, neglecting every beauty to regale on a defect."

The parſon making no reply to this harangue, but by impetuous clouds of ſmoke, diſcharged at intervals with a ſcornful whiff, the ſtranger, in order to ſoften the ſeverity of the ſtroke, replied, that what the gentleman had obſerved was undoubtedly ſometimes the caſe; but he believed rather among the pretenders to ſcience than the really learned, who made great allowance for human error, and generouſly endeavoured to counterbalance faults by excellences, if they could find any to put in the oppoſite ſcale.

"You make a very proper diſtinction," ſaid the lawyer; "but then you will grant that real learning and common ſenſe go hand in hand, won't you?"

"Certainly, Sir," ſaid the ſtranger.

"Why then," ſaid the lawyer, with an arch leer, "I think I can now prove that our vicar here, with all his univerſity education,

cation, is but a pretender to ſcience. 'Twill be granted, I ſuppoſe," continued he, "that we who are here, ſhould we wave the point of learning, are not however deficient in common ſenſe: and now pray, Sir," ſaid he, ſpeaking to the ſtranger, "what is your eſtimation of the verſes before us, conſidering them only as a fragment?"

The ſtranger was now evidently embarraſſed, and I fancied his embarraſſment aroſe from his unwillingneſs to umbrage the vicar: however he at length replied, with his eyes fixed on his ſhoes, from which he was cleaning the dirt with his cane, that his opinion of them was very low; "but," continued he, "I am not competent to decide on this ſubject.

> Let thoſe teach others who themſelves excel,
> And cenſure freely who have written well."

The parſon now took his pipe from his mouth, and haſtily quoted ſomething in Latin, which I did not rightly comprehend (indeed,

(indeed, as in the retailing of tape and buckram there is no occaſion for Latin, 'tis no wonder, though I was reckoned a dab at it when a ſchool boy, that I am rather eſtranged from it now). The ſtranger pauſed; and drawing his hand acroſs his brow two or three times, at length replied, "I have not read that paſſage ſome time," ſaid he; "but pray, Sir, don't it rather run thus?" and then he repeated it with ſome variation.

"No, thank you, Sir!" anſwered the parſon, haughtily; "you muſt allow *me* there, if you pleaſe; therefore no more of your 'cenſuring freely who have written well.' You may as well ſay, none but a taylor ought to find fault with the cut of a coat."

"The ſtranger bluſhed deeply at this tartneſs (I never ſaw a man bluſh ſo in my life, I think); but replied, in a gentle voice, "No, Sir, I would not ſay *that*; but I would ſay none could tell how to alter it, if

if it were unſhapely, ſo well as a taylor. The idle finger of ſpeculation may point, but the practiſed hand of experience, which only knows the difficulty of execution, can determine the poſſibility of amendment; and as to the quotation, though I would rather be thought ignorant than be obſtinately poſitive, yet you will pardon me if I continue to think myſelf in the right; for"——

"Oh, as you pleaſe," interrupted the other; "but though you don't chooſe to be poſitive, I ſhall make no compliment of it, I aſſure you:" and ſo ſaying, he very magiſterially reached out his hand to relight his pipe; but being rather ſhort-ſighted, and reaching for the candle with an air too conſequential, he ſtruck the candleſtick, which ſtood at the edge of the table, with the back of his fingers, and beat it down. The ſtranger, who ſat on that ſide on which it fell, ſtooped to pick it up: the parſon too, at the ſame moment, bending for the ſame purpoſe, their heads met (as the lawyer afterwards obſerved)

obſerved) in the centre of gravity, and ſtruck each other with ſuch force, that the ſtranger, whoſe chair was conſiderably inclined, could not recover himſelf, but, yielding to the ſhock, fell: whilſt the parſon, ſtunned with the blow, hung a moment over him in the poſture of a tumble-down-dick; and then, his head preponderating, fell too: in the ſame inſtant the Briſtolian, who ſat on the other ſide, ſtarting to catch the parſon, unluckily overſet the table, the edge of which gave the vicar's cranium a pretty ſevere wherret.

We were now all darkneſs and diſorder: for the moon, on account of the thick clouds, hardly afforded light enough to diſtinguiſh "a hawk from a handſaw." However, before the ſervant could get a light, the parſon and the ſtranger had made ſhift to recover their legs: but, as though diſcord had taken full poſſeſſion of us, behold now another ſcene of confuſion enſued; for the parſon, like a pettiſh child who,

who, having hurt itſelf, will needs be revenged on ſomething, immediately on his riſing attempted to catch the ſtranger by the collar: but the ſtranger, ſeeing his deſign, avoided his graſp, and caught hold of his arms, which he held; and, to my amazement, inſtead of reſenting ſuch an unprovoked inſult in the manner I ſhould have done, had I been in his place, very calmly deſired him to compoſe himſelf; and, in terms the moſt friendly, reaſoned with him on the unjuſtneſs of his indignation. The parſon, I believe, was rather aſhamed of having betrayed ſuch an ungoverned diſpoſition; eſpecially as the candle, which was now brought in, diſcovered that the ſtranger was an equal ſufferer with himſelf: for, though the parſon had received the ſtroke of the table, the contents of the decanter, which ſtood on it, had entirely ſouſed over the ſtranger. But the parſon is one of thoſe proud ſpirits which will rather do ten unjuſtifiable things, in vindication of an error,

than make a ſingle acknowledgment. Yet the parſon has ſome good qualities: even his pride may, in ſome of its effects, be reckoned as one; for, however faulty himſelf, he will not wink at the peccability of others. Conſequently, during the ſmall portion of the year he reſides with us, the pariſh is kept in the moſt commendable order; whilſt the curate, who is compoſed of the dews of ſenſibility (perhaps too much compaſſionating human infirmity), though the friend and favourite of every one, and in himſelf an example of goodneſs, during the remaining part has little more the controul of irregularity than the log in the lake.—But there are perhaps more cauſes than one of this. 'Tis an affair I ſhall however leave; as I am not writing a hiſtory of the parſon, nor of the curate, but of the ſtranger; whoſe deportment, in the altercation 'twixt the lawyer and vicar, I deſcribe merely to introduce his gentle character to the gentle reader in a gentle manner. Bet-

ty

ty Barnes, my houſekeeper, who is a great reader, and whom *I* conſult, as, I have read, Moliere did *his* (but with this advantageous difference, I conſulting *before* I write, he not till he had *written*), telling me I could not do it by a better method; having firſt obſerved to me, that all hiſtory writers, by which ſhe means noveliſts (for ſo our exciſeman calls them), always make it a point to introduce you to the perſons they write about, and let them ſpeak for themſelves; ſetting them off at the ſame time as much as poſſible by contraſt; which, ſhe ſays, has an effect far preferable to the giving general characters: ſuch as, "Lord Thomas was haughty; Sir Charles was generous; Lady Ann was prudiſh," &c. It may be ſo. Betty has ſeen ſomething of genteel life. She has heard the criticiſms both of the toilette and tea-room on this ſubject, and conſequently is better ſkilled in it than I: therefore, following her directions, I ſhall now proceed.

The parſon, whoſe proud ſtomach would not ſtoop to acknowledge an error, was ſtill endeavouring to bring an accuſation againſt the ſtranger; and the ſtranger was ſtill expoſtulating with him, when Mrs. Barnes, my aforementioned houſekeeper (but whom I introduce here as Mrs. Barnes, rather than Betty, becauſe this was her common appellation among the neighbours), and who had been that afternoon to viſit a ſick acquaintance, entered the ſhop; where ſeeing the parſon bareheaded (for his wig had fallen off), and, with a choleric countenance, ſtanding in the attitude of diſpute with the ſtranger, whoſe back was towards her, and whoſe hair and clothes were dripping with the contents of the decanter, ſhe inſtantly exclaimed, directing herſelf to me, "Bleſs me, Sir! what's the matter?" but, without waiting for an anſwer, ſtepped forward; when, getting a view of the ſtranger's ſide-face, ſhe ſuddenly ſhot between him and the parſon, as a

mother

mother would between a darling child and approaching danger; and, catching him by the hand, cried, in a tranſport evidently compoſed of joy, ſurpriſe, and apprehenſion, "Mr. Penſon!—what, my dear Mr. Penſon! How's this? what's the meaning?"—She was too much agitated to complete her ſentences; and the ſtranger ſeemed as much ſurpriſed as ſhe. Indeed we were all ſurpriſed; and the lawyer now ceaſed his laughter, which he had not ſtinted before, ſince the parſon's fall. However, the ſtranger's ſurpriſe ſoon gave way to gentler emotions. He took both Betty's hands in his, and gave them a moſt cordial ſqueeze, gazing on her with I know not what kind of penſive recognition. But the glance preſently varied; it became the look of an affectionate queſtion. "Betty?" ſaid he. It was the accent of ſomething more; but he ſtopped. Betty however underſtood it. "Yes, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "'tis Betty! Betty Barnes herſelf. I *live* here, Sir. But who

could have thought—how happy—bleſs me!—But, pray, Sir"—and then ſhe ran on in a thouſand queſtions, none of which ſhe had patience to have anſwered. In ſhort, her words were by no means coherent, and her deportment, ſpite of the company, all rapture. "'Tis Mr. Penſon, Sir," ſaid ſhe, ſpeaking to me; "that Mr. Wanley Penſon, Sir, who—but you muſt give me leave—Mr. Penſon, you muſt come in—you are not going farther—you muſt not—you ſhall not. Pray, Sir," ſaid ſhe again to me, "don't let him."

I could not help ſmiling at Betty's addreſs, who ſtill held the ſtranger's hand, and gently pulled him towards an inner room.

Having often heard Betty talk of Mr. Penſon, I begged him to conſider her entreaty as my own; adding that I knew enough of his character to induce me to think myſelf happy in having it any way in my power to ſerve him.

He

He thanked me, but rather with looks than words (for his meeting with Betty ſeemed ſomehow to have moved him), and followed his old acquaintance, who led him to the parlour, and whoſe behaviour manifeſted that ſhe was—truly I think—more pleaſed to ſee him than ever my mother was to ſee me after my longeſt abſence.

"And pray who is this Penſon?" ſaid the lawyer:—"I ſhould think, only he appears hardly young enough, that he is ſome love child of your houſe-keeper's," added he laughing.

"No, Sir," ſaid I; "his connection with Mrs. Barnes is nothing nearer than that of an acquaintance. He is a gentleman, whoſe reſidence is down in the weſt."

"Gentleman!" interrupted the parſon; "a likely ſtory truly, whilſt a ſervant indulges ſuch familiarities with him!"

"What, is then haughtineſs the criterion of a gentleman?" ſaid the lawyer, who embraced every opportunity of contradiction.

"Come, Mr. Parſon," continued he, "though I have not had a univerſity education, I will venture an expoſition of the term you carp at, and then will prove that this Mr. Penſon is a gentleman.—Thus, not plaguing myſelf in ferreting out a fuſty etymon, I will only divide the word as it now ſtands into *gentle* and *man*: now what can be clearer than that this expreſſion implies one whom the inculcation of good manners has rendered *gentle?* And with this definition who will deny that the ſtranger is a *gentleman?*"

To this the parſon deigned no reply; but, directing his ſpeech to me, ſaid, "Pray proceed, Mr. Selby, in your intelligence of this *gentleman*"—laying a particular emphaſis on the term *gentle.*

"Indeed," ſaid I, "I can inform you of very little concerning him, except that my houſekeeper once lived with a lady to whom he paid his addreſſes, and that there were ſome unhappineſſes in his

eaſe

caſe that made an impreſſion on Mrs. Barnes's mind: but that which ſtruck moſt on her imagination, and raiſed him more than any thing elſe in her eſteem, was his being what ſhe calls a poet: that is, he uſed to write verſes ſometimes for her miſtreſs; and theſe being moſtly on the ſoft ſubject of love, a ſubject ſo ſuited to female ſenſibility, they ſo enraptured Mrs. Barnes's fancy, that ſhe even now thinks the author the moſt extraordinary man in the world."

At the mention of the word *poet*, the parſon, with his uſual quickneſs of motion, ſhifted himſelf round to the other ſide of his chair (for he was again ſeated), but ſaid nothing. Indeed he needed not the aſſiſtance of ſpeech to communicate his ſentiments—his wrinkled noſe was a gnomon ſufficiently indicative. But the lawyer filled up what would otherwiſe have been a pauſe in the converſation; exclaiming eagerly, "A poet!—why, Selby, I did not think of

that—I'd have unwound him a little more, had I known it.—A poet!—Why a poet, like you tradeſmen, who enquire for your friend's health and recommend your wares in the ſame ſentence, is generally ſo conceited of his abilities, that he forces his ſpecimens on the moſt abſtracted converſation; or rather, like a patient in a ſalivation, is ſo full of himſelf, that he is ever ſpouting his own wonderfuls! But this man ſeemed very diffident juſt now, though poetry happened to be a ſubject of diſpute.—Well, if he have a grain of poetry in his compoſition Ill be ſhot—No, no—he is not ſufficiently opiniated and dogmatical for a poet. But I ſhould like to have him under a croſs examination too, methinks."

"What, cannot good ſenſe exiſt but with impudence?" replied the Briſtolian.

"Yes, good ſenſe may," anſwered Barclaim; "but 'tis good *fancy*, I tell you, conſtitutes the poet: and fancy frequently runs away

away with the judgment; and then where's your good ſenſe?—Though, hang it—that was a whimſical adventure with the jack-aſs.—I won't ſay—but if he be a poet, he is the firſt modeſt one that ever came within my cognizance."

"Poet!" grunted the vicar, with exquiſite contempt.

"Why, good now, Mr. Dobſon," ſaid Barclaim, "what are all theſe airs about? Your ſpectacles may be good; but is not there a poſſibility that the puffs of pride can dim their glaſſes? For admitting (which by the way I think inadmiſſible) that with regard to the verſes you *poſſeſſed* a diſcriminator, which, like Ithuriel's ſpear, could reduce uncertainties to certainties; yet, with regard to this ſtranger, it cannot ſtead you, as you have not yet had an opportunity of *applying* it. How do you know but Mrs. Barnes's poet has been bleſt with your great all qualifier—a univerſity education?"

"How do I know?" replied the vicar: "why

" why did not Selby ſay he was educated down in the weſt?—What ſeminaries of learning are there in the weſt, ha?"

" No, Sir," ſaid I, " I only ſaid that he reſided down in the weſt."

" See now," ſaid Barclaim, " how your imagination, which dreads the idea of ſeeing in this village a more learned man than yourſelf, forms concluſions from its own depreciating wiſhes.—But ſuppoſe a man *were* not ſo happy as yourſelf in the manner of education; yet, if in the accompliſhment he be your equal, whoſe were the greater merit—yours, who were led up the ſteep aſcent by experienced guides; or his, who only enquired the way occaſionally, and clomb the heights of ſcience unaſſiſted?"

To this the parſon was about to make a reply, which would undoubtedly have been a freſh ſtimulus to the lawyer's ſarcaſms; for the parſon, methought, always ſeemed to enjoy with a kind of fretful reliſh the irritation

irritation produced by the lawyer's loquacity, as an itching horſe enjoys the bite of another that will take the pains to nab him. But whatever pleaſure it might adminiſter to the parties engaged, I was equally tired of the teaſingneſs of the one, and the ſupercilioufneſs of the other; eſpecially as the ſubjects of their altercation were ſo unfruitful of humour: nor ſhould I have ventured to trouble the reader with what paſſed between them this evening, notwithſtanding its uſe in unfolding the character of the penſive man, as already hinted, had I not once heard our exciſeman (who is mightily knowing) obſerve, that critical ſubjects were growing every day more and more a faſhionable reading; that even the friſking magazine ſcribbler, no longer contending at the paſtoral games, now mounted the throne of judgment, certain that *there* however *dull*, he ſhould procure attention; for the ſame reaſon (viz. a reliſh for cenſure) that a piece of ſcandal, however otherwiſe

otherwiſe unintereſting, is ſure to meet with entertainers.

But we left the parſon about to reply, which reply I prevented then, as I have now, though not juſt in the ſame manner; for taking an advantage of a hint the lawyer had dropped, which expreſſed a wiſh of farther diſcourſe with the ſtranger, I aſked the company to walk in, and eat a ſlice of cold ham, which I happened to have dreſſed. Whether or not I wiſhed what I aſked, I leave to the reader's diſcernment: but if I hoped by this means to divide the triumvirate, I was deceived; for after a little ceremony my invitation was accepted, and we all adjourned to the parlour: where on our entrance we found the ſtranger ſitting in the great chair before a good fire, which Mrs. Betty had kindled for his accommodation.

He was ſtripped of his coat and waiſtcoat, which were hanging on another chair before the fire, to dry. A looſe coat of mine

was

was hitched on his ſhoulders; and beſide him, in the great chair, lay Mrs. Barnes's old cat, wrapped up in his handkerchief, whilſt on his feet was ſleeping his own ſhag dog. He had no ſhoes on—Betty had taken them off, I ſuppoſe, to have them cleaned; and in the tumult of her joy had forgotten to provide him with ſlippers.

On our entrance he attempted to riſe, but in ſuch a manner, I obſerved, as not to diſturb the cat or the dog: but Mrs. Barnes, who was preparing him ſome mulled wine, would not ſuffer him to move; and undertook to make his apology herſelf, which was readily admitted, and we were all preſently ſeated.

But after the firſt compliments had paſſed, converſation dwindled, and in a few moments quite fell; for the parſon ſat abſorbed in his own conſequence; the lawyer ſeemed at a loſs what ſubject to ſtart; Mr. Penſon, rapt in thought, was contemplating Betty's old cat; and the Briſtolian and myſelf were,

I believe, equally loath to diſturb his reverie. But it was ſoon diſturbed—Mrs. Barnes ſpilt ſome of the wine; and the ſtranger inſtinctively catching away his foot, threw down the tongs, which fell pretty heavily on his dog. It whined—the ſtranger ſeemed to conſtrue its complaint as an accuſation. "Ay, faithful fellow," ſaid he, "'twas I indeed—but not deſignedly." "Don't be afraid, Sir," interrupted Mrs. Barnes; "I won't hurt you, indeed I won't." "I might have relied on that, Betty," ſaid he, "and not have diſturbed my poor dog: his attachment deſerved from me a better recompence: he *would* come with me; but, poor thing! he is ſadly tired, I believe. There, Tray," continued he, placing again the dog's head acroſs his feet; "there, ſleep again, poor thing."

This trifling effuſion of his humanity pleaſed me, but I believe it paſſed unnoticed with the reſt; and Mr. Penſon's attention was again engaged by the cat, on which

which he fixed his eyes moſt of the time whilſt he was drinking his wine, and once or twice ſighed deeply; which the attorney obſerving, aſked if the cat too had travelled with the gentleman, as he ſeemed ſo anxiouſly to watch its ſlumbers.

"No, Sir," ſaid he, with an eaſe which he endeavoured to affect on the inſtant, but which eſcaped him ere he could complete his reply—"No, Sir; but puſs and I were once well acquainted; and ſhe has been reminding me of what my boſom has long been labouring to forget."

This cat, reader, was an old cat that Mrs. Barnes brought with her when ſhe came to live with me: it had belonged to her late miſtreſs; on which account, I gueſſed, it ſo deeply engaged the ſtranger's attention.

Barclaim made no reply to the ſtranger's penſive acknowledgment: he did not underſtand the language of the heart, as Betty afterwards obſerved, ſo well as that of the head.

head. But preſently, as though he had juſt recollected himſelf, he cried, "Well thought of!—We have not yet given our verdicts on the verſes lately arraigned: permit me, gentlemen, to collect your opinions;—'twill however ſerve to expel ſilence from among us. That gentleman," continued he, meaning Mr. Penſon, "has already delivered his; therefore we will permit him to enjoy his dumb converſe with tabby: but you, Sir," ſpeaking to the Briſtolian, "what is your opinion of this foundling fragment?"

"I don't pretend to any great ſcholarſhip," replied Mr. D. (the Briſtolian); "but I think 'tis pretty enough: pity though the writer had not employed his talents on a better ſubject." Compoſed hymns, I ſuppoſe he meant; for M. D—— is a religioniſt, a kind of diſſenter, but I hardly know what kind.

"Oh, I gueſs you are a married man," returned the lawyer: "but, however, for love

love verſes, you think them pretty enough, don't you ?"

" Yes, ſo far I grant you," anſwered the other.

" Very well then," continued Barclaim; " and now pray let us have your judgment, Selby."

" Why," ſaid I, " I think 'tis evident the author was in love, and I think he has expreſſed himſelf not unaptly; but whether critically nice or not, I muſt leave to be determined by you and the vicar; though all who have felt the touch of love, I believe, will agree that

> Nothing in nature can compare
> With the dear joys that lovers ſhare."

" Well ſaid, Selby," cried the lawyer: " thou art in love over head and ears, that's plain."—But, reader, I have my doubts whether there be depth enough in love quite to drown a man of five and forty; though I own I am ſometimes near blundering in

head foremoſt, as men in years generally do, ſouſe at once, and ſhaking their lank noddles ever after.—But Barclaim proceeded to obſerve on the opinions he had collected, that a thing may be ſo written as to affect with a degree of pleaſure every body but a critic; "and on the other hand," continued he, "I believe it may be ſo compoſed as to ſatisfy a critic, and nobody elſe."

Here the ſtranger, who now ſeemed perforce to bring back his attention to the company, interjoined with his uſual diffidence of accent—"Inſipidity may be regular, and animation may be uncouth. But——to enjoy a comfortable evening, I would prefer a cottage with a warm corner, to the moſt finiſhed dome, where I ſhould ſhiver amidſt the fine proportions of columns and pilaſters."

"Indeed!" cried the lawyer: "why yet, if I recollect aright, you gave your verdict againſt theſe poor verſes. But perhaps you deem

deem them not ſufficiently warm to make amends for their irregularity."

The ſtranger bluſhed deeply, but did not reply. Indeed I had obſerved that he ſeemed peculiarly uneaſy whenever theſe verſes were under diſcuſſion. But Barclaim now turned to the parſon—"Well, Mr. Dobſon," ſaid he, "I have collected the evidence, and I think the voice of common ſenſe runs againſt you in the proportion of two to one; therefore I conclude, from what this gentleman here has allowed, and what you have not diſputed, that you are under the neceſſity of acknowledging yourſelf only a pretender to ſcience."

"Before I acknowledge that," ſaid the other, "I ſhall appeal to a more competent jury. But ſince you will make me ſpeak on ſo worthleſs a ſubject," continued he, "I will juſt aſk whether ſuch irregular meaſures are at all ſuited to ſuch a gentle ſubject, or ſuch pompous metaphors to a female capacity." The latter part of this ſpeech

was delivered with an air that beſpoke it unanſwerable: but the attorney had caught too much of the endemia of the bar to be ſo ſilenced. "Gentle ſubject indeed!" exclaimed he: "ſay rather mad ſubject, Sir. This moment it might be as gentle as a dying child, 'tis true; but the next you will find it as ungovernable as Phaeton found his father's horſes: therefore, Sir, I think the pindaric flightineſs ſuits it to a tittle."

"Pindaric!" repeated the vicar in his uſual key; "you know nothing of the matter, Sir, or you would not talk of pindarics."

Here the ſtranger again interjoined, obſerving that, though the mutilation before them was not, in his opinion, worth the breath they ſpent on it; yet, as to the propriety of the ſtyle in which it was written, he thought the company could not judge of it, unleſs they knew the capacity of the lady to whom it was addreſſed. "Homer has been blamed," continued he, "for put-

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ting Ulyſſes on relating ſuch incredibilities as he does: but his defenders juſtify him by ſaying the tales are rendered in a degree probable by their being related to the ignorant and credulous Phæacians. I don't know whether Homer ought to be obliged to them for this juſtification or not: but with regard to the *manner* of treating ſubjects in general—I beg your pardon, gentlemen—but I think it cannot be juſtly ſaid to be too lofty or too low, too learned or too ſimple, unleſs, as well as the ſubject treated of, we conſider for whoſe peruſal the treatiſe was principally deſigned."

"You mentioned Homer," ſaid the Briſtolian; "'tis true I cannot read him in the original; but, from a peruſal of the Engliſh verſions, methinks, if his tranſlators have been faithful, he was but a blunderer; for I never in my life read any thing ſo full of inconſiſtencies: not that I ſhould have noticed his defects, had not his tranſlators crowded every page with notes, in

order to exculpate him. I believe," continued he, "if the work of a modern writer required ſo much exculpation, it would be condemned without a comment."

The parſon, at the concluſion of this ſpeech, aſſumed an air of contemptuous ſurpriſe; the lawyer laughed; but Mr. Penſon calmly replied—

"I agree with you, Sir, that a modern with ſo many faults as Homer would certainly be condemned, as he would not have Homer's excellencies to counterbalance them: though I don't know whether Homer's critics, in order to ſhew their penetration, have not pretended to diſcover faults which do not in reality exiſt; and, if you will excuſe ſuch a ſimile, like tinkers, to evince their dexterity at mending, ſometimes made a hole where there was none. Poetry is not, I believe, more ſubject to frenzy than criticiſm to the cramp, which of late has not even flexibility enough to trace the churchyard with the gentle Gray,

but

but halts and ſtumbles on every period, like Bunyan's blind man among the tombs; though his cadence ſhall continue to lull the ear of harmony, and his pathos to affect the boſom of ſenſibility, when his commentators ſhall be excluded from remembrance."

"But Homer, Sir; you were ſpeaking of Homer," interrupted Barclaim; who, as he delighted in fomenting diſſenſion, obſerved probably that *that* was the topic moſt likely to treſpaſs on the vicar's patience—"you were ſpeaking of Homer, Sir," ſaid he; "but you have made a long ſtride: you have not the cramp, I think."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," replied the other: "I am too apt to deliver myſelf immethodically, but I was adverting again to Homer; and I feel a certain pleaſure at this moment in ſpeaking, not ariſing from the vanity of the pedant, but from the hope of diverting you from a ſubject which ſeems unworthily to provoke diſagreement."

"Homer! Homer!" again interrupted Barclaim.

"Why, Sir," replied the ſtranger, "I only mentioned Gray, to obſerve that, if on his ſmooth ſimple theme the critic's foot find impediments, no wonder that on ſo buſtling and complicated a ſubject as Homer's, it ſhould frequently be diſtanced."

"But Sir," ſaid the attorney, "methinks this is little to the purpoſe: that gentleman there hinted an inuendo rather diſreſpectful to the prince of poets. I thought you had taken up the gauntlet in his defence."

"He needs it not," replied the other, "Princes in every department are ſuperior to my cenſure or aſſiſtance; and, on the other hand, the character is too great to intereſt me. The hero may excite wonder, yet not affect my boſom: and ſcenes of carnage and devaſtation I conſider rather as the diſgrace than the glory of mankind. In ſhort, ſir, you may gueſs my propenſity when

when I tell you, however I may admire Homer, I would ſooner be the author of Gray's Elegy than the Wars of Troy; for then I ſhould be felt rather than admired."

The lawyer eyed the parſon, whoſe ſeat began to grow uneaſy; but thus returned: "Very humble truly: though this won't ſuffice, Sir; 'tis at leaſt miſpriſion. You muſt give me leave to take your examination, I think: come, firſt your ſentiments of Homer's originality."

"You are merry, Sir," rejoined the other; "and to afford your mirth matter, I will anſwer—I admire Homer; he aſtoniſhes me; I allow his precedence, I own his ſovereignty: but arts don't ſtart up like muſhrooms: they are perfected by ſlow degrees. Invention and perfection, I believe, were hardly ever known to meet; and what helped our Milton in the compaſſing his deſign, moſt probably aſſiſted the Grecian in accompliſhing his, viz. improving on precedents. And though I have allowed Homer's

Homer's ſovereignty, and would not wiſh to diſpute it; yet, on this probability, I ſee no reaſon why the Grecian ſhould not ſuffer the Engliſhman at leaſt to ſhare his throne. Nothing but the antiquity of the former ſecures him from a partner; for is not the latter as ſublime, as inventive, as wonderful, as philoſophical? I won't ſay more ſo, becauſe allowance muſt be made for their different ſyſtems; though with that allowance I think Homer tranſgreſſes the bounds of probability much more than the modern: but I don't wonder to hear, notwithſtanding, every thing modern decried in compariſon of this ancient; for it requires a long and tedious application to become maſter of his language; and a continued application to any particular ſtudy generally makes a man an enthuſiaſt therein. I have heard a ſhoemaker, for the honour of his craft, aſſert that to make a *good* ſhoe required ability equal to that required for the fineſt art, and that a well finiſhed one merited the atten-

tion of connoiſſeurs as much as St. Paul's cathedral; though, at the ſame time, the poor fellow acknowledged it was out of his power to produce ſuch a one."

Here the laugh of the lawyer and the contempt of the parſon were transferred from the Briſtolian to Mr. Penſon; who, however, after having obſerved with a bluſh, according to cuſtom, that, whatever were their ſentiments, he was pleaſed with their attention, added, "that, as he was not ſingular in his opinion of Homer, he would with the leſs timidity venture a ſurmiſe, inſpired by the captiouſneſs of ſome in this *wiſe* age, who undervalue the genius of Milton on account of his ſubject—that the ancients more reſpected their mythology than the moderns their religion; for otherwiſe Homer's applauſe could never have been ſo univerſal."

This addition ſeemed to mingle the tint of indignation with the contempt before viſible in the vicar's features. Whether or not

not the random ſhaft found the joints of his harneſs, I cannot ſay, neither was there leiſure for the proof; for the attorney immediately rejoined—

"Very explicit, Sir; you prevent me a number of interrogatories. For, having done with his originality, I intended to have proceeded to queſtion you on the ſublimity, the fertility, and the wonderful, ever aſcribed to the Grecian: but you acknowledge a doubt of abſolute originality; and, as to the reſt, you have dropt implications ſufficient, I think, when put together, to amount to this—that whoever gives the reins to improbability may invent wonders enough."

"You connect my implications too coarſely, Sir," ſaid the ſtranger: "I have too much veneration mixed with my ſentiments of our primæval poet, ever to be fitted by the dreſs you have put them in; though I do not ſcruple to own there are books I can read with greater pleaſure than

than *The Wrath of the Son of Peleus*, or *The Wanderings of Ulyſſes.*"

This concluſion, I ſaw, did not raiſe the ſtranger in the ideas either of the lawyer or parſon, who were now, together with the Briſtolian, heartily regaling on the cold ham. Mr. Penſon having ſatisfied himſelf with toaſt and wine, declined taſting the ham, and continuing by the fire enjoyed the company of puſs, and poor Tray, and honeſt Mrs. Barnes, all the time the others were at ſupper. Indeed Mrs. Barnes was ſo engaged in whiſpering to and attending on him, that, had the girl who does the drudgery of the houſe been abſent, my other gueſts muſt have waited on themſelves. But I could readily excuſe this, becauſe I knew Betty's eſteem for Mr. Penſon; and, to countenance her in her attention to him, I myſelf ſometimes quitted the table to ſit a moment with him; and took an opportunity to acquaint him how much, through my houſekeeper's frequent encomiums, I

was

was prepoſſeſſed in his favour; deſiring him to abandon all ceremony; and, though I ſhould be ſorry to be deprived of his company, yet as he could not be otherwiſe than fatigued, begged him, whenever he would wiſh to retire to reſt, to give Betty orders, who I would venture to ſay had prepared him every accommodation the time and circumſtances admitted. The language of his gratitude was very conciſe, but it was ſpoken with the accent of truth: and ſome little time after, making a ſhort apology to the company for his abruptneſs, he retired.

And I feel a certain conſciouſneſs that the reader is not diſpleaſed he did ſo, from the probable hope that his abſence may produce ſomething more amuſing than a dry, literary altercation, which, though it originally employed but two ſhort hours, has however, in the recital, detained us longer than I intended. But I have already adduced *one* reaſon which prevailed with me to record it; and, beſides that it ſerves to exhibit

exhibit our hero as a man of letters—I wiſh ſome other word had occurred to have been ſubſtituted inſtead of *hero*; for this, methinks, no more becomes the gentle Penſon, than a huſſar's cap would a pigeon—I ſay, beſides this, I have yet another reaſon, which I ſhall offer in its proper place; for indeed there is nothing ſo incongruous wherein what we call *reaſon* cannot be made a party concerned; nothing ſo oppoſite but *reaſon* may appear on either ſide. Intoxicated by inclination, it becomes its counſel, ſlips on the pleader's gown, and flouriſhes away with all the aſſurance of ſelf-approbation. The author, ambitious of applauſe, produces his claim; and reaſon enlarges on it. The reader, vain of his penetration, oppoſes him, and reaſon defends the oppoſition. War, for *weighty* reaſons, is waged on *ſlight* grounds; and a *ſilly* peace often follows for *wiſe* reaſons.—But what of all this? Nothing, ſave to induce the reader, if he be not a Sir *Poſitive*, to allow that

that *my* reaſons may ſtand "in the catalogue," for reaſons as well as his *own.* And now we proceed.

Mr. Penſon was no ſooner retired than the parſon and lawyer began, equally, to animadvert on his manner and ſentiments; and the epithets, queer dog, odd fellow, and whimſical thing, were plentifully beſtowed; whilſt the Briſtolian and myſelf undertook either to make his apology or defence: yet, amidſt this oppoſition of opinion, all parties ſeemed equally deſirous of knowing ſomething more of him; eſpecially what had conduced to give a man at his time of life ſuch a penſive manner and rather unuſual turn of idea. But as I, though I had often heard Betty relate particular incidents reſpecting him, was incapable of giving that general information which ſeemed to be wiſhed for, I engaged that Betty, when ſhe returned from attending Mr. Penſon to his room, ſhould treat us with a ſuccinct account of him, that ſo we might

might learn the cauſe or cauſes that had given him ſo remarkable a caſt: for it might truly be ſaid of him, that he bluſhed extempore; that he ſighed habitually; and was frequently loſt in thought, ſeemingly in ſpite of his endeavours to the contrary: that his attention to converſation was only the conſequence of his extreme ſolicitude not to give offence, and not excited by any deſire to mix with, or obtrude himſelf on company.

From theſe, and other little traits he had diſcovered of his character, the diſcerning vicar thought he had ſufficient grounds to conclude his erudition imperfect; and the attorney, that he was unacquainted with mankind; whilſt the Briſtolian obſerved that his ſentiments, ſo far as he could judge of them, perſuaded him to believe that he was equally ſkilled in the tenets of books, and the manners of men; though it ſeemed that he did not chooſe himſelf to adopt the

one entirely, nor conform preciſely to the other.

But Mrs. Barnes was now returned; and I informed her of what I had engaged for on her behalf, and which ſhe ſeemed not at all averſe to fulfil. "O, Sirs," exclaimed ſhe, in her uſual rapturous manner, "Mr. Penſon is the beſt gentleman in the world! So conſiderate, ſo compaſſionate, and ſo ſweet-tempered, for all he looks ſo melancholy, that I am ſure I ſhall never do him juſtice with my ſilly tattle."

"Come, come Betty," ſaid I, "you can tell a good round ſtory, if you will but ſet about it."—And ſo ſhe can; for, as I have before obſerved, ſhe has read a good deal, which helps her occaſionally to deliver her ſentiments in a manner one ſhould not expect from one in her ſtation: but it renders her deſcriptions whimſical; for her memory being occupied by the ſtyle and manner of her readings, which have been moſtly in the fanciful

fanciful line, ſhe imagines that ſhe can never give her relations too high a colouring.

Betty (or, if the reader would rather, Mrs. Barnes) was now ſeated; and the gentlemen having finiſhed their ſupper, and reſumed their pipes, ſhe began as follows.

THE

MELANCHOLY MAN.

PART II.

SELBY'S HISTORY CONTINUED;

OR,

BETTY's NARRATIVE.

I SO truly eſteem the object of your preſent curioſity, gentlemen, that, though I am conſcious of my inability to anſwer it as I ought, I nevertheleſs really feel myſelf obliged by your requeſt, as it gives me an opportunity of indulging what is a pleaſure to every body; namely, the ſpeaking of thoſe who poſſeſs our regard.

But

But will it not prejudice me in your opinion, if, on the firſt outſet, I trifle a moment on the ſubject of pedigree?

I heard a perſon once ſay we had been ſo accuſtomed to the obſervation "that *ſomething* cannot ſpring from *nothing*," that we allowed the conſequence of the words, wherever applied, without examining the application; and as, by common conſent, the term *nobody* is now applied to perſons of obſcure birth, or low fortune, it never enters into our heads to ſuppoſe that from ſuch nobodies it were poſſible a *ſomebody* may be extracted.

This is undoubtedly a prejudice of the fancy; but as I would not have you think the preſent object of your enquiries abſolutely *nobody*, I will take the liberty to inform you that Mr. Penſon is ſprung, by his father's ſide, from the Penſons of T** in Somerſetſhire, a family rather good than opulent; and, by the mother's, from the Wanleys of N** in Wiltſhire, who had

greater reaſon to be grateful for the favours of fortune; and that himſelf bears the names of both families, he being chriſtened William Wanley to conciliate the affections of his mother's only brother, of whom I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak farther by and by.

Mr. James Penſon, the father of the preſent William Wanley Penſon, being but a younger brother—and the family eſtate, which however was not very large, deſcending as uſual to the eldeſt—poſſeſſed only a few fields, which brought him in about fifty pounds a-year. This being too little for a family to ſubſiſt on any way decently, he engaged in the malting buſineſs, which he carried on in an extenſive line, at G—— in the county of Somerſet, where, excited by a family pride, chaſtened at firſt by neceſſity, but afterwards beguiled by intereſt, he endeavoured to connect in himſelf the two characters of a tradeſman and a gentleman.

He

He had only one child beſides the preſent Mr. Penſon; it was a daughter: but ſhe was ſtolen by ſome gypſies when ſhe was about two years of age, to the great grief of her parents.

After the years of mere childhood were elapſed, Maſter Wanley reſided moſtly with his uncle, his mother's brother, at N—, in Wiltſhire, who had taken a peculiar fancy to him; and well he might, for he was of an excellent diſpoſition: and, as his uncle had no child, it was ſuppoſed that he would inherit his fortune; nobody thought otherwiſe.

Here his uncle put him under the care of a ſchoolmaſter, of whom he had a good opinion, and who taught him all that is uſually taught in ſchools. But his uncle, who was reckoned a complete ſcholar, ſuperintended his education himſelf, and initiated him in a variety of knowledge which ſurpaſſed the ſchoolmaſter's abilities; and for this undertaking he was exceeding

well fitted both by inclination and a ſedentary habit.

"What!" I have heard him ſometimes ſay, "ſhall a rational man find a pleaſure in teaching the bird to perfect its ſong, the dog to apply its ſcent, and the horſe to regulate its pace; and not a far greater one in teaching the young mind to expand its faculties? Thus have I heard him argue when occaſionally indulging, at once, perhaps, an encomium on himſelf, and a boaſt on the abilities of his young nephew: for Maſter Wanley was a moſt apt ſcholar; and I have heard his maſter and uncle both ſay that in him induſtry and ingenuity met—a conjunction it ſeems not very common.

His humanity too, for which he is now ſo remarkable, was alſo a character of his youth. I have known him frequently buy birds of his playfellows only for the pleaſure of giving them their liberty; and he would rejoice as heartily when he ſaw them winging away, as others would when they had

had enſnared them: and often have I heard him indulge his imagination in deſcribing to my young maſter, Tommy Bountly, and my young miſtreſs, Miſs Linny, his favourite companions, the joy the parents of the birds he had relieved would expreſs on their return, and what ſad ſtories the liberated captives would have to tell of what they had ſuffered. This brings to my mind an incident which, though but childiſh in itſelf, may perhaps in its conſequences not be unentertaining to you; as, by your eagerneſs half an hour ſince on the ſubject of poetry, you ſeemed to diſcover a reliſh for it.

Whilſt ſhe ſaid this, ſhe ſtepped to a drawer, and took out a bundle of papers; then, reſuming her ſeat, ſhe continued—

My young miſtreſs, Miſs Linny Bountly, who was then but what one may call a great girl, walking one day in the village where we then reſided, obſerved ſome boys throwing at a little bird they had tied to a ſtick

ſtick for that purpoſe. The ſight excited her commiſeration; her feelings were nearly as exquiſite as Maſter Penſon's: ſhe bought the bird at a good price, and brought it home. It proved to be a fine nightingale, and happened not to be hurt: ſhe was delighted with her acquiſition, and placed it in her prettieſt cage. Maſter Wanley came in ſome time after, with maſter Bountly. Miſs Linny immediately produced her nightingale, at once to communicate her own pleaſure, and receive the applauſe of a commendable act. She had it warmly from both, and eſpecially from maſter Wanley; but who, after having extolled her humanity in the moſt exquiſite terms, recommended it to her to complete her own pleaſure, by giving the bird its liberty. This was touching an unexpected ſtring; it ſeemed to jar; ſhe loved the bird too well to part with it; and the reſt of the family ſeconding her inclination to keep it, Maſter Wanley deſiſted for the preſent

from

from his perſuaſions, and ſoon after took his leave. Next morning he came again; and, with the moſt ſuppliant air he could aſſume, put the following verſes into her hands.

To Melinda.

The Captive Bird.

O would its twitt'ring tongue afford
Such language to a little bird
As would its gratitude impart,
And reach its gen'rous ſaviour's heart—
O tender nymph, my voice I'd raiſe
In richeſt notes to ſing thy praiſe.
I'd ſing—but, oh! my little throat
Can never reach that maſter note—
I'd ſing ſublime of thoſe that feel!
I'd ſing the ſoul-ſuſceptible!
That glow of ſoft humanity,
Richly effus'd, O nymph, by thee;
Which, like the ſun-beams, unconfin'd,
Cheers nature's woes of every kind;
That ſympathy which ſtill receives
Itſelf the ſolace which it gives;

As the fond zephyr, when it blows,
Anxious to cheer ſome drooping roſe,
Finds ev'n th' attempt reward its pains;
And breathing ſweets, new ſweets obtains.
But, ah! for me, poor little thing,
This is a ſong too hard to ſing.
Yet you who feel, would you but teach,
Again I'd try the note to reach.

Sweet ſaviour of poor little me!
I know my life yields joy to thee:
I know thy feelings rate me high,
However weak and worthleſs I.
I too can *feel*; and though 'tis true
That I can't *think* ſo well as you,
Yet with what pleaſure now I live,
Not you yourſelf can ſcarce conceive.
But, ah! not love of life inſpires
Merely, what now my boſom fires:
Oh no! I feel far tenderer things:—
From ſocial ſource all pleaſure ſprings;
Depriv'd of this, nor you nor I
Would long to live, but wiſh to die.

'Tis life to love and be belov'd.
Then think what woes my boſom prov'd,
When cruelty, with wanton freak,
Threaten'd this ſocial band to break:
Think, ſympathiſing fair one, think,
Trembling, alas! on Death's dread brink,

How

How hard 'twere not to bid adieu
To thoſe you lov'd, and who lov'd you!
How hard, if not a friend ſtood by,
With gentle pity in his eye,
Your agonizing hour to ſooth,
Softly your dying bed to ſmooth;
Or, ere ſtern Death your lips did ſever,
Seal with a kiſs your loves for ever.

Oh! had this threaten'd fate been mine,
What grief, dear *Avy*, had been thine!
Dear mate! how hadſt thou taught each grove
And thicket to reſound thy love!
How queſtion'd every mead and lawn,
"Ah, where's my faithful Phil'mel gone?"
Or, wond'ring that ſhe ne'er return'd,
Her loſs in ſilence ever mourn'd.

Yea, how had ſhe, whoſe foſtering wing
Hatch'd my young life, forgot to ſing!
Or how the rudely echoing wild
Mock'd her ſad plaint—"My child! my child!"

Then, had theſe mourners chanc'd to ſtray
Where my poor mangled carcaſe lay—
O what a ſcene!—that thought's too deep—
Ev'n *now*, perhaps, theſe lov'd ones weep,
And yield me loſt!—oh ſet me free!
Oh! to my life add liberty:

That

That I upon the wings of love
May fly, their ſorrow to remove.

Then, then, when they ſhall ſee I live,
What joy their little breaſts will heave!
And when, as they ſhall hear from me,
How firſt you ſav'd, then ſet me free,
They'll join my doubly grateful ſong,
And ſing your goodneſs all day long.

My young lady read; but ſcarcely had ſhe got to the concluſion ere ſhe flew to the cage, and gave the captive its liberty.

But to return to Mr. Penſon. And, as I am on the ſubject of his diſpoſition, I muſt not omit his charity, which, if not abſolutely a natural propenſity in him, was however infuſed ſo early that it ſeemed conſtitutional.

The appearance of diſtreſs, even when a boy, ever awoke his ſympathy; and to give relief, ſeemed only doing himſelf a favour. Often have I known him diſburſe the laſt penny of his pocket-money to pitiable objects that perchance implored his

aſſiſtance. Nay, if they did not implore it, if he ſaw others deny, he was ſure to give. He uſed to ſay, that to wait the being aſked, where diſtreſs was evident, was a ſpecies of cruelty; as it was putting the diſtreſt, untimely, on an inveſtigation which the moment of relief could only render them equal to.

Once in particular, I remember (but he was then verging towards man), he was ſtanding at the court-gate before our houſe, with my old maſter Mr. Bountly, when a foreigner (by his aſpect and manner) approached, and preſenting a paper with ſeveral names on it, begged to know where the perſons, whoſe names were there written, reſided. Their dwellings were ſeverally pointed out to him; but, being informed my maſter's name was among the reſt, he made ſigns of diſtreſs, and ſeemed to aſk relief. He could not ſpeak Engliſh; and my maſter, not over-eager to underſtand the drift of his geſticulations, beckoned him away;

away; obſerving, one could not be too wary of impoſtors. The poor fellow was going; when Penſon, who had hitherto been only a ſilent ſpectator, ſtept a few ſteps after him, and ſpoke to him in French. The foreigner turned round with the quickneſs of ſurpriſe, and anſwered him in the ſame language (though he had not ſpoken it before); and in reply to what was, I ſuppoſe, on Mr. Penſon's part, a queſtion, told a very plaintive ſtory; at leaſt ſo I judged from his geſtures, for I was in the court juſt by.

I ſaw Penſon's heart was moved, by the emotions of his countenance; and before the poor man could finiſh his tale, he ſlipt his hand in his pocket, and turning his back towards where my maſter ſtood, interrupted the accents of diſtreſs with a piece of gold.

The poor wretch, I believe, hardly credited his own eyes; for he looked at the gift and at the donor alternately two or three

three times; and then dropping ſuddenly on one knee, caught his benefactor's hand, and kiſſed it with ſuch energy as I had never ſeen. He ſaid but little, and what he did ſay was to me unintelligible; but I would at that moment have given my whole year's ſalary to have enjoyed what Penſon enjoyed, to have received ſuch thanks as he received: but he withdrew his hand; and the ſtranger, with tears guſhing from his eyes, retired in the attitude of imploring bleſſings from heaven on him.

My maſter, though he did not ſee what Penſon gave, yet knowing his diſpoſition, and judging by the ſtranger's manner that he had given him ſomething conſiderable, commenced, on Penſon's rejoining him, a ſhort lecture on credulity and impoſition.

"Was that look, was that gratitude, impoſition?" replied the youth; and the tear ſtood in his eye: for Penſon's ſenſibility

kept company with his whom he had relieved.

"But where procured he that liſt of names?" ſaid my maſter.

"The drowning will catch at bubbles," replied the other. "Poor fellow! without language, and deſtitute, in a ſtrange land!.....I would give him more if I had it," added he with vivacity: and he walked off, methought, more truly great than he who conquers kingdoms.

I have already hinted that his generoſity was a thing well known. My maſter and miſtreſs were frequently uneaſy at it, eſpecially as it ſeemed to increaſe as his reaſon became more mature: and they often took the liberty of checking him in it; and thought they were juſtified in ſo doing, not only as it affected him, but as it was probable it might ultimately affect themſelves: for, as well from the friendſhip ſubſiſting between Mr. Bountly and Mr. Penſon's uncle, as from the intimacy of the young

folks, it was not only expected, but wiſhed, that a match would ſome time take place between the young gentleman and Miſs Melinda. They were in a manner bred up together: for Maſter Bountly, Linny's brother, going to the ſame ſchool with Maſter Penſon, they became almoſt inſeparable companions; and in conſequence Maſter Penſon was nearly as much of his time at our houſe, during the time my maſter reſided at N—— (which was till after the young gentleman had quitted ſchool), as he was at his uncle's.

Indeed he was ſo much with us, and Maſter Bountly (I may add Miſs Bountly too) was ſo fond of him, that he was conſidered as one of the family, even from a boy; and I have reaſon to believe, a peculiar affection took place between Wanley and Linny (as we uſed familiarly to call them) at very early years. They were never aſunder, if they could find an excuſe to be together: for if Wanley and Tommy

were contriving any plaything, or learning any taſk, Linny would find a pretext occaſionally to join them; or, if Linny was engaged, Maſter Wanley would be ſure to ſuit his employ to the place of her engagement: and having indulged theſe familiarities when children, they continued them when grown up, without any conſciouſneſs of impropriety.

Indeed, as they advanced in years, they were daily inventing new methods to enjoy yet more of each other's company. Among other things, Maſter Wanley having a natural taſte for the ſciences and fine arts, and having made rapid acquirements therein, it was propoſed between them, but by which party in the firſt inſtance I can't ſay, that Miſs Bountly ſhould be initiated in ſome of his moſt favourite ones, and in order thereto that ſhe ſhould occaſionally become his pupil. The ſcheme was encouraged by the old folks, and put in execution, to the no ſmall pleaſure of the young ones; and

as Miſs Bountly proved herſelf a very apt ſcholar, it became a freſh ſtimulus to Maſter Wanley to increaſe his ſtock of knowledge, in order to have the pleaſure of retailing it to his favourite.

It has been obſerved that nothing quickens the faculties like love: and theſe certainly loved, though they were as yet unacquainted with the nature of their own feelings.

The firſt time I ever obſerved any thing like conſciouſneſs in them was once when Miſs Bountly had committed ſome capital error in a drawing ſhe was executing under Mr. Penſon's direction. They were ſitting in a back parlour, and I was buſy in an adjoining room: the door of the parlour was open, and there was a large looking-glaſs almoſt oppoſite the door; ſo that, though they were ſitting in a remote part of the room, I could by the reflection ſee all their motions.

Wanley was drawing on the ſame table

with Miſs Bountly, and nearly oppoſite to her, when ſhe deſired him to give her his opinion, for ſhe believed ſhe was wrong. He aroſe, and going by the ſide of her chair, leaned one arm familiarly on her ſhoulder while he overlooked her performance. He preſently noticed its defect, and put her in a method to remedy it, which ſhe immediately ſet about; aſking him why he did not correct her for her faults? "How ſhall I?" ſaid he. "Why, beat me," ſaid ſhe. "There then," ſaid he; and he gave her a gentle tap on the cheek with the hand that leaned on her ſhoulder. She ſmiled. "Never had maſter ſo light a hand," ſaid ſhe. "Never had ſcholar ſo ſoft a cheek," replied he, and ſuddenly gave her a kiſs. It ſeemed to be the impulſe of the moment, involuntary, and irreſiſtible; and I believe was the firſt liberty of the kind he had ever taken, or ſhe permitted; for they were both inſtantly covered with the deepeſt confuſion.

Miſs

Miſs Bountly indeed, without ſaying any thing, pretended to continue her employment; but her manner ſhewed that her attention was little engaged by it: and as to Wanley, he preſently after ſtole away to his chair, as much confounded as though he had been detected in a crime.

They continued in this aukward ſituation, neither venturing to look the other in the face, till Maſter Bountly joined them; when Miſs, preſently after, aroſe and left the room in a manner ſo unuſual, that my young maſter immediately aſked Wanley what was the matter with his ſiſter? The queſtion increaſed Wanley's confuſion. He ſtammered—"Why—indeed he was not—a—aware—that—" "Nay," interrupted the other, "only that I know you are both deficient in the requiſites for quarrelling, or I ſhould ſuppoſe truly you had now fallen out." "No, indeed," replied Wanley (and he looked very ſheepiſhly), "indeed we

have not quarrelled:—but—ſince you will know—I'll tell you.—She had committed an error in her drawing, for which I am afraid I corrected her in a manner that merits her reſentment."—"Merits!" reiterated the other; "no ſuch thing, Wanley! I know you could not do ſo. Deſerve correction, yet reſent it! Oh, a huſſey! what lady airs already! I'll go and give her a lecture for this now."—"Nay, pray don't," cried Wanley, eagerly ſtopping him; "'tis I'm in fault—indeed it is—or, if you will go—only tell her how ſorry I am."—"Be hang'd if I tell her any ſuch thing," replied the other. "No, no! humouring a firſt fault is nouriſhing a ſecond (that I learnt of my mother): and I love my ſiſter too *well* to ſpoil her, and my friend too *reſpectfully* to make him acceſſary to her imperfection." And, ſo ſaying, he changed the diſcourſe; bidding his friend not ſink from his character as preceptor, and he would anſwer

anſwer for it, his ſiſter's good ſenſe, on a little reflection, would ſoon teach her what became a pupil.

This laſt obſervation did not accelerate Penſon's compoſure: he was abſent and liſtleſs; and, as ſoon as he could decently, ſlipt away home.

After this I obſerved that the two conſcious parties never met without a bluſh, nor continued together without a viſible conſtraint in their deportment. Nevertheleſs Wanley continued to give Miſs leſſons as uſual: but familiarity now no longer characterized their interviews; on the contrary, they were aukwardly ceremonious. They did not ſeem reluctant to meet; but, when met, were either mentally abſent, or uneaſily attentive. He would ſit and look at her ſometimes, when her countenance was averted, with the moſt contemplative earneſtneſs; but, if their eyes happened t meet, you never on the ſudden ſaw two faces ſo fooliſh.

I pretty

I pretty well gueſſed how things were going; but I believe they did not ſo far inveſtigate their own ſenſations as to induce them to come to an explanation till ſome conſiderable time after, when my maſter had an eſtate left to him in Somerſetſhire; in conſequence of which the family were preparing to quit their reſidence at N—, in order to be nearer their new territories, and to occupy an old family manſion that Mr. Bountly was partial to at G——, where Mr. Penſon's father reſided.

It was ſoon evident that Wanley was not at all happy about this removal; for, as his uncle was too fond of him to endure his abſence, it was not *then* likely he would ever reſide long together with his father at G——, where in future he could only hope to enjoy his uſual intercourſe with our family; conſequently he was about to experience, perhaps for ever, a ſuſpenſion of his every day's pleaſure.

He was naturally of a very ſerious and re-

reflective turn; and it followed that events ever ſo little unuſual affected him ſenſibly. "There is nothing human (I once heard him ſay) wherein the good is totally abſtracted from evil: thus reflection, while it teaches us to reaſon ſtrongly, leads us alſo to feel perhaps too deeply." This he experienced early; for at the age of fifteen he ſeemed poſſeſſed with all the ſentimentality of mature years.

For a month before we left N——he was coming backward and forward to our houſe all day long, yet ſaid very little. He was unuſually ſilent. He would ſometimes draw his chair towards Miſs Bountly, if they happened to be alone together, as though he was going to enter into ſome intereſting converſation with her; and preſently, as though he had detected himſelf in an involuntary error, he would ſtart up, and leave the room with an unaccountable abruptneſs.

Miſs Bountly, on theſe occaſions, would gene-

generally riſe ſoftly to look after him; and, when ſhe ſaw he was gone, would return with an air of diſcontent, which ſhe had not art enough to diſpoſſeſs herſelf of.

The reſt of the family ſeemed not to notice their behaviour: what they thought I know not; but, for my part, I acknowledge that I was anxious to know where this dumb-ſhow would end: but it was not till the day before *that* appointed for our departure from N—, that my anxiety was relieved.

On that day he came as uſual to our houſe; and without any ceremony, according to cuſtom, entered the front parlour: but finding it empty, with his arms croſſed on his breaſt, and a very dejected look, he came into the room adjoining the back-parlour, which I before mentioned, where I then was employed in packing up ſome of Miſs Bountly's things. He aſked me where the family were; I anſwered him that Miſs was in the adjoining parlour, but I did not know

know where the others had diſpoſed of themſelves. Indeed I concluded that a direction to my young miſtreſs was the true import of his queſtion.

He immediately paſſed into the parlour to her; and it directly jumping in my head, from the peculiarity of *our* circumſtances, and the diſtreſs viſible in *his* countenance, that ſomething of the tender kind would tranſpire now, if ever it would—and being curious to obſerve its caſt—I inſtantly went (that the parties might be under no reſtraints on account of my being near) and ſhut myſelf into a cloſet that was oppoſite the parlour door, and conſequently oppoſite that looking-glaſs I had occaſion to mention juſt now on a ſimilar occaſion, and which was not yet taken down.

The door of this cloſet was half glaſs, with a curtain inſide, which favoured my deſign to a nicety: and I had not been ſecreted any great while ere Mr. Penſon walked to the door of the parlour; and, though

though ſeemingly with an indifferent air, I believe his deſign was, as I expected, to ſee if I were near or not: for, obſerving the coaſt clear, he went and ſat down oppoſite my young miſtreſs, with his arms ſtill folded; and fixing his eyes ſtedfaſtly on her, as ſhe ſat ſewing, fetched a deep ſigh.

Miſs, I obſerved, was in her uſual confuſion, and dared not truſt herſelf to look up.

In this ſituation they continued ſome time; till Miſs, I believe, not able longer to ſupport the ſcene, aroſe to come out. Wanley's eyes were ſtill fixed on her. He obſerved her going—

"Linny," ſaid he, without moving from his ſeat, "you will then leave me?"

"I am going for my needle book, Sir," ſaid ſhe.

"No, Linny," cried he; "you are going to G——."

"Not to-day," ſhe replied; I'm only going now for my needle book."

But

But ſhe did not proceed: ſhe ſeemed as though waiting for ſomething; and Wanley, looking at her ſtill more wiſtfully, exclaimed eagerly, but with a kind of ſigh—"Ah, Linny!"—and ſtopt. Miſs Bountly now went back to her ſeat, and ſitting down, ſaid—

"Mr. Penſon, what is the matter?—If you would rather I ſhould not fetch my needle book, I will try to do without it."

He now ſtarted eagerly on his feet; and dropping inſtantly on one knee before her, clapſed her hands in his, and fixing his eyes moſt expreſſively on hers, remained ſome moments quite ſilent; whilſt Miſs Bountly's changing countenance plainly indicated the workings of her ſenſibility.

But 'twas not long ere love found other language beſides looks. It broke forth in another ſigh!

"Ah, Miſs Bountly, how good you are!—Yet you would have left me!—Poor Penſon is not yet forgiven!"

"I don't

"I don't underſtand you, Sir," ſaid ſhe.

"Oh there was a time," cried he, "when Linny's eyes always told Penſon he was a welcome viſitant: but long have I loſt their favour!—I have wandered about you, like a ghoſt round a hoarded treaſure which it dared not touch. I beheld you; but how was your countenance averted!—My Bountly has a ſiſter! How I envy him! I too once had a ſiſter; but, alas! am now deſtitute!—Like the unherded beeve, I have none to draw forth the ſoftneſs of my breaſt. Ah, Linny! were you but my ſiſter, how pleaſed ſhould I be to preſs theſe hands, to plait theſe pretty ringlets, to play with my Linny, and to have my Linny permit——ah—ſhe would then perhaps, with pleaſure, permit my familiarity. Then with what affection ſhould I watch her looks! with what tenderneſs ſhould I ſooth her anxieties! with what attention prevent her deſires!—But I merit not ſuch felicity. Yet you loved me once—did not

not you, Linny?—Oh if you would but love me again—that you would but conſider me as your brother! My tongue faulters at the expreſſion; but the wiſh methinks is invincible, that Linny were my ſiſter."

He ceaſed, or rather Linny could contain herſelf no longer. She was made of the moſt ſuſceptible materials; the tear was already trickling.

"You *have*, Linny, then," cried ſhe; "ſhe *will* love you as her brother; ſhe always loved you."

Penſon now looked at her as though he queſtioned the evidence of his ſenſes; but preſently he cried in rapture—

"And *will* Linny be again my ſiſter? My more than friend?——————— Yes!" continued he, letting go her hand, and claſping her in his arms, "ſhe will, ſhe *is*."—And after having gazed on her face for a moment with indeſcribable affection, he gave her a kiſs of ſuch fervent ecſtaſy, as though his ſoul was diſſolving on her lips.

Ah, ah! thought I, this is mightily brother-like! and Linny bluſhes, to be ſure, much like a ſiſter!—They themſelves too, I believe, were preſently aware of the farce they were playing; for Linny, after a few moments, gently diſengaging herſelf, ſaid, with the prettieſt confuſion imaginable—

"Wanley, do brothers thus expreſs their affection for their ſiſters? Bountly doesn't."

Wanley pauſed: he traverſed the room twice, with his eyes caſt on the floor; at length—"No," ſaid he, "I am wrong; I had not ſcanned the height of my deſires—I envied Bountly's happineſs in his ſiſter—but I find that which I envied would not ſatisfy me. O Linny," continued he, "can I behold this fair form, and not wiſh to embrace it? thoſe lips, and not wiſh to expire on them? Correct the phraſe, ſweet maid! if too preſumptuous; but pardon the feelings that inſpire it—feelings I cannot yet characterize, and which prompt a language I am not maſter of. Methinks I know

know not my own wiſhes; but, if they have betrayed me to your diſpleaſure, I am wretched; if you hate Penſon, he is miſerable."

He ſaid this with ſo piteous an accent, that Linny thought, I believe, ſhe ought to comfort him; for ſhe took hold of his hand with an air compoſed half of tenderneſs and half of familiarity, and ſaid, ſmiling through the tears that yet gliſtened in her eyes—

"I believe Wanley is not conſcious of his expreſſions, or he would not ſpeak of my hating him: if he were not dear to me, I were an ingrate; and the delicacy of his attentions hitherto convinces me that the goodneſs of his heart will not ſuffer his affection to take a cenſurable ſhape. Yet there may be an impropriety in my indulging his preſent emotion—for, conſider——"

"O Linny," replied he, with quickneſs, "I conſider nothing but that I love you! and even that I do not conſider; I feel it."

"Thence ariſes the impropriety, Wanley. Your friends may have different views —your proſpects may command a ſuperior fortune."

"And ſuperior happineſs too, Linny? Ah, no!—happineſs may ſometimes be the companion, but ever ſcorns to be the ſubordinate, of wealth."

"But our years——"

"Are thoſe of youth, I acknowledge; but you ſtudy objections.—Is it nature, or is it art, my Linny? Sweet term! Did not you ſay you were mine?—Why then parry with that affection whoſe ſhape you acknowlege uncenſurable—but—yes—you are generous—you are prudent—you are *yourſelf* —I too am *my*ſelf; I am fond and fooliſh. Guide me, direct me, then; but direct me not from you.—I love you, I now feel I have long loved you; but the avowal of it as love was unwitting, and without an inference; and even now, beyond the permiſſion to love, and the felicity of enjoy-

ing the ſoft regard of my beloved, ſuch is the rapture of my ſoul, that I form no idea."

"Faith, Betty," interrupted the lawyer, "you have an excellent memory to retain ſuch a deal of dialogue."

"O, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "a love ſcene and a tale of detraction never fail to connect themſelves cloſely with female remembrance. But, however, you need not have interrupted me here, for the ſoft interview was at an end. I heard my miſtreſs coming down ſtairs; and I bounced out of the cloſet, and ran to take up the things I had been packing, in an affected hurry. Whilſt Mr. Penſon, having given his charmer a haſty embrace, walked up to the door, as if to ſee what was the matter.

What paſſed afterwards I know not, except that Mr. Penſon ſpent the day with us, or rather with his Linny.

But, from the ſignificant ſmiles that paſſed between the old folks that evening, I gueſſ-

ed an explanation had taken place to their ſatisfaction. For, independent of his being conſidered a good match for Miſs, they, and eſpecially my miſtreſs, had a partiality for young Wanley. Indeed he had rendered himſelf ſo agreeable by his many accompliſhments, the pleaſure with which he communicated his obſervations and experience, the gentleneſs of his diſpoſition, and the amicability with which he endeavoured to ſmooth the little ruggedneſſes which occaſionally aroſe in the family, that he was become abſolutely neceſſary to its happineſs.

Indeed he was ſo remarkable for this laſt quality, that my fellow-ſervant uſed frequently to compare him to the oil wherewith ſhe ſometimes oiled the kitchen jack; obſerving that, but for him, the family would be ever whetting in its movements.

"But, Betty," again interrupted the attorney, who always loved to be teaſing, "to what end or purpoſe have you thus treated

treated us with the minute particulars of a love ſcene, whilſt you run over others with ſuch a haſty progreſſion as hardly to mark them? Surely you take your auditors for a ſet of girls."

"To what end, Sir?" replied Betty; "why, did you not wiſh to know why the gentleman was ſo penſive? If I had told you he was penſive without a cauſe, you would have thought *him* a knave, or *me* a fool; or, if the truth had allowed me to aſſign a cauſe unmixed with *love*, perhaps ſome of you would have queſtioned its adequacy, and none ſympathized with its effect. The ſtyle of ſorrow (as I once heard Mr. Penſon ſay) which originates from other ſources, is in general too elevated for univerſal comprehenſion; in proof of which, I remember he cited the tragedies of Julius Cæſar, Cato, Coriolanus, &c. and obſerved that even Hamlet's woes would far leſs intereſt us, had not his affection for the gentle Ophelia given them a caſt that fits them to the

feelings of every one. To ſympathize with diſappointed ambition, a man muſt be ambitious; to feel for his country, a man muſt be a patriot; to participate the ſenſations ariſing from a loſs of fortune, one muſt know what affluence is: but theſe are not incident to every man. As ſtrong waters are not ſuited to every taſte, ſo ſome paſſions can only affect peculiar diſpoſitions; but love—like the beverage of nature, which every one, at ſome period of life or other, with pleaſure imbibes—affects all, and is affected of all."

"A weak ſimile for love, indeed!" replied the lawyer, "but not ill-ſuited to your argument; ſo e'en let it ſink in it. However, ere you proceed in your narrative, which I acknowledge you flouriſh off capitally, as it is better to ſet things well a going at firſt than to correct and alter afterwards, give me leave to hint to you, Mrs. Barnes, that there are three things wanting hitherto in your deſcription, neceſſary to make

make your hero complete. The firſt is, *perſonal* charms. You ſhould have perſuaded us that, eight or ten years ago, he was a perfect Adonis: in the next place, you ſhould have repreſented him in ſome ſcrape, and extricating himſelf with ſword and piſtol, in order to impreſs us with an idea of his *courage:* and, to finiſh all, you ſhould have beſtowed on him a *title.*—— Come, come," continued he, "you have omitted the firſt, and ſeem to have given up the laſt—but *courage* is yet in your power: you muſt indiſpenſably prove him poſſeſſed of that, or all your ardour will not raiſe your recital to the ſublimity of a common novel."

"Sir," ſaid Betty, "I will venture to pronounce for him, that 'he dares do all that may become a man;' but as 'who dares do more, is none,' I own my opinion of his heroiſm is ſuch, that, to evince it, he will never deprive a fellow-creature of exiſtence,

iſtence, the ſhape of whoſe noſe may not juſt pleaſe his fancy. In reply to your other hints, I beg leave to remind you that I am not relating a romance.——You have ſeen what his perſon is—but as to his countenance, you know nothing of it. You have beheld his features as a fire laid, but not lighted. Had you ſeen it as I have ſometimes ſeen it, all animated with ſenſibility—as when with his Linny in the parlour, or when he relieved the diſtreſſed foreigner—oh then he looked like ſomething even more amiable than what I can conceive of an angel—a ſeraphic ſoul ſoftened with human affections. As to title, though his be not allowed in the degrees of ambition, yet he has one ſuperior to what is deſerved, and ſuperior too to what is poſſeſſed, by half the nobility in the kingdom, that of a good and honeſt man."

The warmth of Betty's panegyric excited a laugh from us all, in which ſhe herſelf

herſelf joined with great good-humour; but, being deſired to proceed in her narrative, ſhe reſumed it thus:

"I have told you that this explanation between the young folks took place the day before that deſigned for our departure from N——; which departure, had it followed according to expectation, I dare ſay would have been a ſad nip on their new-blown loves: but an accident occaſioned it to be poſtponed for ſome months. That afternoon, in the midſt of our buſtle in packing and preparing, we received a letter from young Mr. Bountly, at G——, informing us, that, in making ſome alteration in the houſe we were going to inhabit, one of the ſide walls having been weakened, had given way ſo far, that the workmen now judged it neceſſary to take it down and rebuild it.

"This intelligence, however unwelcome it may have been to ſome others, I believe the lovers were not at all inclined to repine at.——But, as you ſeem to think love

ſcenes

ſcenes beneath your attention, I ſhan't trouble you with a deſcription of what you would call a thouſand little nothings which paſſed between them, but which love creates and magnifies to ſomething ineſtimable; I will only inform you (as I have it here in my hand) that 'twas during this period, and I believe early in it, that Wanley preſented Miſs Linny with theſe verſes. Poetry was an amuſement he was much addicted to from a boy; but I believe this was his firſt attempt on an amorous ſubject."

"Mrs Barnes," cried Barclaim, "before you read, give me leave to hint a doubt, that the means by which you procured the paper you hold, if known, would not much exalt you in your maſter's eſteem.—I am afraid your curioſity has been a filcher, Mrs. Barnes; and, was I in Selby's place here, I ſhould be very careful how I truſted you with my ſecrets: for I ſuppoſe you would be equally tenacious of

his,

his, as it ſeems you are of thoſe of your former principals."

"Beg your pardon, Sir," ſaid Betty; "I reveal no ſecrets—theſe papers contain none—their ſubject is only love, and that is a free commonage all the world over. But, to remove your prejudice, I will inform you that theſe copies were taken by permiſſion—I loved the family they concern—I was intereſted, my affection intereſted me, in their affairs; and, in return for this affection, I found perhaps greater favour than I could otherwiſe have deſerved.—And now, as I preſume your ſcruples are ſatisfied, I will venture to read the verſes.

'*To Melinda.*

'Waking ſolace, ſoothing dream!
'Cauſe and cordial of deſpair!
'Love!'——"

"Hey-day!" interrupted the lawyer; "what is this I hear?—Why theſe are the found-

foundling verſes, Selby!—thoſe we have been diſputing on, Mr. Parſon!"

"I thought what 'twould all amount to," replied Dobſon, contorting his noſe, now, moſt exquiſitely: "a perſon of fine accompliſhments, I warrant him, by this ſample!—I knew 'twas the work of ſome ſuch *village wonder*," continued he, eyeing the lawyer with an aggravated degree of contempt. "No more of it! I have not patience to bear the repetition."

"Why what's the matter, Sir?" ſaid Betty, colouring very highly. "Produce better things of your own than theſe I have read you, compoſed at as early an age, and theſe ſhall ſubmit to your deriſion."

"Age!—better things!"—grumbled the parſon; "there is not a trait of real erudition in either of them."

Betty was nettled.

"I don't underſtand your traits, Sir," ſaid ſhe; "nor can I pretend to diſallow your ſkill in erudition: but I am ſure if Mr.

Mr. Penſon be not your equal in *learning*, he is in *knowledge*."

The parſon looked ſurpriſed at Betty's warmth, and turned towards me, as much as to ſay, I ought to reprove her flippancy; but I would not take the hint.—To tell thee the truth, reader, I thought the vicar's ſuperciliouſneſs deſerved it; and I believe the ſame thought in ſome degree poſſeſſed my other gueſts. There is, as I heard our curate once obſerve, a certain conſciouſneſs of equality impreſſed on the mind of the human ſpecies, which induces a pleaſure from whatever humbles aſſumed ſuperiority. If we *allow* an excellence, we find an expanſion of mind *in the allowing*, that raiſes ourſelves; but the aſſuming it *un*allowed, is like a highway robbery, where, though the rifled ſtands daunted perhaps before the rifler for a while, he yet eagerly embraces the firſt means of doing himſelf ample juſtice on the offender.

But though I was inclined to ſuffer the vicar

vicar to ruminate a moment in ſilence, the lawyer was reſolved not to let his or Betty's ſtomach ſettle for want of irritation.

"Learning and knowledge, Mrs. Barnes!" cried he—"why how came you to make a diſtinction between them?"

"Make it, Sir?" ſhe returned—"I had no need, it makes itſelf. What can be more diſtant than theſe qualifications ſometimes are? what can be more diſtinct?"

"What do you call learning, then?" ſaid he.

"What every body does," ſaid ſhe—"the being able to ſay 'Good-morrow,' in half a dozen languages: and which, as I have heard better folks than myſelf ſay, makes a man never the wiſer."

The parſon could now hardly keep his ſeat. The lawyer obſerved it: he knew Dobſon was a Quixote in letters, and thought the languages the ſublimeſt of all ſtudies; and therefore, not to miſs an opportunity of tickling his hobby-horſe, he con-

continued his colloquy with Betty, by aſking her what ſhe meant by *knowledge.*

"Not talking gibberiſh, Sir," ſaid ſhe. "Why look you now," ſhe continued, "if I were able to ſing you 'Down the Bourne, Davy Love,' in Latin, yet did not know how to mend a ſhirt, or make an apple dumpling, Mr. Selby would not think me worth keeping, I believe."

"Apple dumpling, woman!" cried the vicar:—but the indignant ſentiment of his boſom was too much ſwollen to paſs his throat. However, his countenance, which was not unlike the countenance of a perſon forcing a coſtivity, rather diſcompoſed Betty; but Barclaim was not to be put off his ſcent.

"Be patient, Mr. Dobſon," ſaid he, "can't you?—I think, for my part, there is ſome reaſon in what Mrs. Betty has advanced. I have always thought that knowledge conſiſted in an acquaintance with uſeful things—in a copious ſet of well-arranged

ideas—in an intimacy with ſcience, that teaches us to diſcover the cauſes and effects of things, ſo as to apply them in arts ſerviceable to mankind."

"Very well," anſwered Dobſon haſtily; "and pray have not the languages been ever conſidered as the key to this knowledge?"

"I grant you that," replied the other; "and they may be the key ſtill: but the cabinet is now unlocked; and who would give themſelves airs on having found a key to a thing that has long ſtood open? There was a time when the learned languages were neceſſary to modern knowledge, becauſe in thoſe languages were concealed the moſt excellent branches of ſcience: but now they furniſh us with no idea which our own language cannot convey; and certainly you will allow that knowledge conſiſts in ideas, and not ſounds. 'Tis well known, Sir, that the languages have been ranſacked by our forefathers; and every

every thing valuable in them, except the mere beauty of expreſſion, tranſlated into our native tongue. Therefore thus far only, Sir, can the languages be conſidered as the key to knowledge:—they have unlocked its archives. But the metaphor will hold no farther, for they cannot lock them again."

"Very fine all this, indeed!" ſaid the parſon, ſarcaſtically.

Here the Briſtolian ventured to interjoin:—"Nay, gentlemen," ſaid he, "I think we ought not, even at this day, to depreciate the ſtudy of the languages as a thing of no value, ſince our cotemporaries are thereby enabled to aſſert the authenticity, to correct the errors in the tranſlating, or to elucidate the meaning of precepts of the utmoſt importance to us."

"Sir," replied Barclaim, "to depreciate the ſtudy as a thing of no value, is far from my intent: I would only lower a little the vanity of thoſe who think that wiſ-

dom conſiſts in the being able to dreſs a ſingle idea in ſeveral different garbs. Wiſdom indeed! then wiſdom were a coxcomb!—I would compare ſuch a language-monger to a mechanic who had procured an immenſe aſſortment of tools, but never learnt their uſe: or rather to one poſſeſſed of ſeveral ſets of the ſame tools, differently mounted; but who, unable to execute any thing with them, only prided himſelf in arranging and comparing them."

Betty now took heart again:—"That's juſt how Mr. Penſon uſed to argue; who, though he may not be able to talk in Dutch and Hebrew, and ſuch out-of-the-way languages as perhaps Mr. Dobſon here can; yet in ſeveral others, I will venture to ſay, not merely from my own judgment though, that he was as well ſkilled as himſelf: but then he never valued himſelf on it, nor ever ſubſtituted in his diſcourſe a foreign word in preference to a naturalized Engliſh one. This practice,

tice, I have heard him ſay, as a true-born Engliſhman, he ſcorned; eſteeming the cuſtom not unlike that, equally in vogue, of ſupplying the place of a nervous Britiſh ſervant with a flimſy French lacquey. Not but that I have heard him ſometimes make uſe of very abſtruſe terms, at leaſt they were ſo to me; but then it was to thoſe who underſtood them, and perhaps on ſubjects that admitted not of more familiar language: for he would talk with our ſurgeon as though he had been bred a doctor of phyſic; with the exciſeman, as though he had paid attention to nothing but figures; to the miller, as though he had ſtudied nothing but wheels and pulleys; and to many others as though he had been of their profeſſion. And he did not only talk, but on occaſion he could *do* too; for he would often ſay, 'What ſignifies a man's piquing himſelf on a little theory, whoſe *head* is precluded from adding any thing *new* to the common ſtock of uſeful knowledge,

becauſe his hand can prove nothing of the old by putting it in practice? To what purpoſe were his faculties given him, if, on an emergence, he can apply them to no end?—A man,' he would ſay, 'ought to know ſomething of every thing; not only to prevent being impoſed on by others, but in order to be able to help himſelf or his neighbour in caſe of diſaſter.'—And two inſtances of himſelf occur to me juſt now, that juſtify his reaſoning:—Our ſervant-man, in cleaning the ſnow from the parapet, fell, and was taken up for dead; the ſurgeon was in London, and no help to be had for many miles. Penſon heard of the misfortune, and haſtened to our houſe; he breathed a vein of the unfortunate man, who revived. But there was a bone dangerouſly fractured: the agonies of the ſufferer conquered the timidity of his aſſiſtant; Penſon ventured to try at a reduction of the fracture; he ſucceeded, and undoubtedly ſaved the poor fellow's limb,

if

if not his life.—Another time (I ſhall never forget what a pucker we were in) we had company to dinner; when, juſt in the midſt of our preparations, ſome part of our kitchen jack failed. The ſmith was inſtantly ſent for, but was nowhere to be found. None but thoſe who know the anxiety of us females on ſuch occaſions, can gueſs our diſtreſs: when luckily in ſtept Wanley; who, ever ready to relieve every ſpecies of misfortune, having enquired the cauſe of our *quandary*, made free with a tool from the ſmith's ſhop, and ſet us all a going again in ten minutes."

The parſon hardly heard the concluſion of Betty's ſpeech, ere he ſtarted up, and ſtriding acroſs the room with an impetuous importance—"Grant me patience!" cried he; "like poſitions, like inference truly! A man ſtudy knowledge all his life-time in order to mend a jack!"

"And therein he did a greater piece of ſervice for his acquaintance, perhaps, than

you have done for yours all your li time, with all your learning, Sir," rejoined the attorney. "Come, come, Mr. Dobſon, no depreciating mechanic arts: they have done more eſſential ſervice to mankind than all the logic of the ſchools; and I like to hear of a man of parts ſometimes amuſing himſelf in them: 'tis from him they may expect improvement. He who labours for daily bread, for the ſake of expedition, ſtill proceeds in the old beaten path: he has no time for making obſervations, nor perhaps abilities to calculate a conſequence, or purſue an obſcure hint. Theſe are the province of a cultivated mind, in eaſy circumſtances; and I would recommend the *practice* of mechanic arts a little, as well as the theory, as a thing equally conducive to health and of ſervice to ſociety, to every gentleman in the kingdom."

During this harangue the parſon had reſumed his ſeat: perhaps he found an erect

erect poſture leſs ſuitable than a ſedentary one. The lawyer, I believe, expected at the concluſion of his ſpeech to ſee him fly off again; but he was diſappointed: the vicar appeared to be one of thoſe whoſe temper the fumes of wine affect as heat does a razor—a ſmall degree rendering it more keen, a greater lowering it even to dulneſs. During the laſt altercation, he had tiffed his glaſs perhaps oftener than he was aware of, and its effects were henceforward marked by the decreaſe of his irritability.

However, it was not ſo much decreaſed yet as to render him indifferent. He eyed the lawyer as a beau would a chimney-ſweeper, that preſſed too cloſe by him: but, inſtead of anſwering him, directed his reply to Mrs. Barnes, deſiring her to continue her narrative; which, though it could not be thought any way entertaining to a man of education, was however better than arguing with ignorance.---"But obſerve,"

ſerve," continued he, "mean as the compliment is you pay me in ſo doing, I can more readily excuſe you for ſetting your hero before me as a mechanic than as a poet; therefore, if you would not wiſh to ſink him yet lower in my eſtimation, be as ſparing as poſſible of his attempts that way; for, of all characters, I think there is none more deſpicable than that of an idle unqualified rhymer."

And the lawyer agreeing there was none more deſpicable, except that of an ill-natured and *more idle critic*, Mrs. Barnes was ſuffered to continue her recital as follows.

But, ere I continue it to the reader, I think it not improper to acquit myſelf of an engagement I made him ſome pages back, of aſſigning, at a fit opportunity, my final reaſon for having troubled him erewhile with the particulars of a croſs-purpoſe dialogue, generated from the foundling verſes introduced in the commencement of this hiſtory.

I was

I was once preſent at a diſputing club, when the ſubject to be decided was, which gave proofs of the moſt placable diſpoſition—

A gouty man who could chop compliments with an acquaintance who trod on his toes, without making a wry face?

A huſband that in his uſual voice could bid good-morrow to a gallant he unexpectedly met coming from his wife's bedchamber.

A king that could take a kick on his breech from a ſubject without reſentment?

Or, a poet who could attend an adverſe criticiſm on his own works, with a rational compoſure?

I will not trouble the reader with the argument; indeed I don't know that my memory retains it. But it concluded in favour of the poet: and if this concluſion were juſt, my hero muſt be allowed to poſſeſs the utmoſt point of placability, as the reader is already acquainted with his deportment

during a cenſorious examination of a compoſition, which ultimately proved to be his own.

" But could not this placability of character have been diſplayed in a manner more ſuited to the general taſte than that in which you have diſplayed it?"—" Perhaps it might, Madam (for I will ſuppoſe this to be a lady's queſtion), but not by me; though I would hope that the manner I have adopted may be as allowable as that which you would propoſe.—' The diſpoſition of the parts of a work,' ſays a great author, ' the inſertion of incidents, and uſe of decorations, may be varied a thouſand ways with equal propriety: and, in things nearly equal, that will always ſeem beſt to every man which he himſelf produces.'

" But if you deem yours *good*, why have you thought it neceſſary to apologize for it?"

" Why, Madam, there may be——But I will not enter on diſquiſition. Let me tell

tell you a couple of ſtories of two painters; either of which, as you think moſt fit, I give you leave to apply to me.

" The firſt was a Dutchman. He had painted a groupe of figures which might have done him credit, had he ſuffered the piece to have been viewed at a diſtance, where the eye could have judged of the *all together*; but priding himſelf on the pains he had taken with particular parts, and fearing the beholders might not be ſufficiently ſkilled in his art to notice their exquiſiteneſs, he was ever forcing their noſes cloſe to the canvas, that they might ſee and admire a mole he had painted on the face of one of the figures, and which was '*veer* natural, for dat it vas de exagg'd reſemblance even to de hair of von upon his own noſs.'

" The other was an Iriſhman, who equally vain of being thought a connoiſſeur in beauty, and a good hand at a portrait, had painted his wife's picture. But doubtful perhaps,

perhaps, on deliberation, that he had not given ſufficient proofs of the one in his choice of a bedfellow, nor of the other in his pencil-work, he very carefully, on the day of exhibition, paſted labels on every feature, to point out at once their beauty and their reſemblance; obſerving, in the ſtyle of his country, that ſome things appeared moſt ſtriking all together, when ſhewed in parts; and that, though nobody knew his wife, the likeneſs might happen to be found fault with, for all that."

And now, reader, having accounted, and I hope ſufficiently apologized, for the plan I have purſued, and (ſuppoſing myſelf the Dutchman) intending no more to force thy noſe ſo cloſe to the canvas as I have done—or (if thou wilt rather have me the Iriſhman) propoſing to paſte no more labels on my portrait—I will continue the delineation of the Penſive Man.

We left Mrs. Barnes about to purſue her recital, which ſhe did thus:

"I have

" I have already told you that the lovers did not appear at all diſpleaſed with the accident that prevented for a while their ſeparation. 'Twas their happineſs to be together; they had no idea I believe of that affection which requires abſence, as a dull fire does a pair of bellows to keep up its heat. The only thing that ſeemed an alloy to their happineſs, was the anticipation of that period when they ſhould no longer be able to exchange the tender look, the affectionate accent, every hour, as they now did; and to derive reciprocal pleaſure in adminiſtering to, and witneſſing, each other's felicity.

But though their affection was of that kind which required not the excitation of abſence, they were however to experience it; and though I have little opinion of that love which can admit intentional abſences, yet perhaps unavoidable ones may give a fervour to the moſt ſublime: and I don't know but young Wanley with all his enthuſiaſm,

thuſiaſm, and Miſs Bountly with her ever overflowing tenderneſs, experienced ſomething of this, though they would never acknowledge it.

I ſhan't trouble you with their parting ſcene: I ſhall only ſay that it was more pathetic than the circumſtance ſeemed to require: but it was attended with a diſappointment; as Mr. Penſon had propoſed to accompany the family to their new reſidence, and was only prevented by his regard for his uncle, who happened unluckily to be ſo ill as to be unable to diſpenſe with the ſoothing attentions of his beloved nephew. And I have often heard Penſon ſay, he ſhould deſpiſe himſelf, if he purchaſed a gratification to himſelf at the expence of a friend's happineſs.

But how he bore this ſeparation I ſhall leave to be evinced by his own ſentiments, as I have a letter in my hand which Miſs Bountly received from him a ſhort time after our departure from N——.

" To

" To Miſs Bountly.

N——.

"LINNY, already am I ſet down to write to you. Had I followed the impulſe of my own heart, I ſhould have done ſo the firſt hour; I ſhould have done ſo every hour ſince you left me. Yet what have I even now to acquaint you with more than you know already? But I write for the ſake of communing with you. It is not for the ſake of devoting to you an idle hour: No!—My hours are all devoted to you. When you are not preſent to my thoughts, then am I not ſenſible of my exiſtence: but the idea of times paſt ever quickens me to that ſenſation; and, as life is always attentive to whatever moſt feelingly convinces it that it lives, is it much that I indulge that idea?

" There was a time, Linny, when to ſee you, to ſit by you, to walk with you, to

hear you ſpeak, convinced me of my being, and I was pleaſed without conſidering why. I felt I lived; but I knew not then that the feeling was excited by love. I exiſted, but it was in a dream. You awoke me, and I was yet more pleaſed: I had gained a new life; I lived to my Linny! Linny lived to me! My ſoul was elated—my pulſe beat more full—my life was augmented with the life of my beloved.

"What ſhall I liken this union of exiſtence to?

"Is it not like theſe tapers that now burn before me? I have two; I have placed them together; even now their flames are united. How much more vigorous do they burn! How much more brilliant is the light they afford! They ſhall remain together; they ſhall illumine me while I commune with the counterpart of my ſoul. I will view them as the emblem of our loves. Gentle tapers! May no rude hand ſeparate you! May no obnoxious blaſt

diſturb

diſturb you! United be your flames even till they waver in the ſocket, and may they only expire together, ye emblems of pure affection!

"But ah, Linny, whilſt I guard theſe tapers, how are we ſeparated! Separated! No—diſtance cannot ſeparate ſouls: ours are even now preſent with each other. Yet, methinks, I feel very uncomfortable: I ſhould be aſhamed to acknowledge to any but you, how very weak I feel myſelf. Philoſophy is only ſomething to go a mumming with! 'Tis a maſk that drops off if the ſoul be moved. I thought I had been a greater maſter of myſelf; but 'tis all a farce: I am a mere old woman, full of reveries and anxieties; and all my uncle's wiſe precepts are vaniſhed into air. I am vexed with myſelf: I ought to be happy. A few weeks, and I ſhall ſee her who has given me her heart: but I am like a whimpering half weaned child; I cannot bear to be debarred what once gave me ſuch exquiſite pleaſure—the ſociety of my Linny: and

becauſe I cannot have what I want, I cannot enjoy what I have.

"Let me correct myſelf. Is love a dilator of the heart? Is it not rather a contractor? Methinks I feel mine expand only one way. But can I forget my friend, my Bountly? It appears ſo; for I have not before mentioned him. No—Love has not driven friendſhip out of my heart; but it has pent it in a very cloſe corner. I love my Bountly; but I love you ſo much better, that all other affections, like the rods before Aaron's, are ſwallowed up. My heart is melted down: but I cannot regret it; ſince it is only in order to be mingled with the pure ſtandard of yours. Is the implication too bold that yours is melted alſo? No, the mixtion is already made: we have only a compound between us.

"But to what does this compound incite my beloved in the abſence of her faithful Wanley? I could divine: but ſhe knows not my frequencies when at

G——,

G——, that ſhe can *there* retire and think on her Penſon, as he does *here* on his Linny, wherever he recollects her to have been. Abſence like death endears every remembrancer. Abſence! Death! What a gloomy connection! But my heart is heavy. Linny's preſence no longer enlivens it; and I find no amuſement now but in ruminating on the pleaſures I once poſſeſſed, and in retracing, like a ſad ſurvivor, the ſcenes of my expired felicities.

" Where'er my ſteps diſconſolate I move,
As oft, to cheat the time, I ſhift the ſcene;
Whether I ramble down the duſky grove,
Or trace the brook, or wander o'er the green;

Abſent I tread, and count what joys I knew
When ſmiling friendſhip cheer'd my ſtudious hours;
When Linny's preſence bleſs'd my raptur'd view,
And love's ſoft impulſe quicken'd all my powers.

For, diſpoſſeſs'd of life's enlivener here,
The gentle converſe of congenial ſouls,
Night heavily brings up the loitering rear
Of each dull day, that o'er the landſcape ſcowls.

The brook may ogle jocund to the morn,
The meads perfume deep noontide's lapſing gale,
And purple tints, at playful eve, adorn
Yon elms, whoſe whiſp'rings huſh the moonlight vale:

But heedleſs now I gaze the proſpect o'er,
And thankleſs heav'n's own breath my boſom draws;
Till at ſome bank, which once my Linny bore,
Or at ſome gate ſhe paſs'd, forlorn I pauſe.

In quick confuſion then each abſent thought
Returns, and crowds the mindful place around;
Returns, with Linny's gentle image fraught,
Again to paſs the gate, or preſs the ground.

Or if to yon mute manſion I repair,
The ſeat of friendſhip once, and love, and joy;
I curſe the ſtroke, if innovation dare
The leaſt memento of the paſt deſtroy.

Around that hall, now deſolate and ſad,
Where late my Linny lightly tripp'd along;
Where once I too, for then my heart was glad,
Mixt in light meaſures with a ſocial throng,

Now I in ſolemn ſilence lonely tread,
And penſive gaze each fancied footſtep o'er;
Yet pleas'd, by fond imagination led,
To preſs where once my Linny preſs'd the floor.

Then

Then do I ſit where once my fair reclin'd,
And urge ſad converſe to the echoing walls;
Whilſt thro' the void, back to my wiſtful mind,
My Linny's accents faithful mem'ry calls.

Mute as yon midnight ſtar, who now the ſighs
Of ſleeping nature liſts attentive o'er,
I liſt to fancied ſounds till rapt ſurmiſe
Oft paints me Linny at the half-clos'd door.

But ah! th' illuſion 'ſcapes my quicken'd eye—
And, like one baniſh'd on ſome deſert iſle,
I fold my vacant arms, gaze round, and ſigh
For ſome new dream, the moments to beguile.

"Accept the ſketch, my Linny: 'twas inſpired by you; to you be it dedicated: 'tis the picture of deſolate love, and ſuch is mine. I cannot enjoy the company of my Linny, of my Bountly, of the companion of my youth, of the partner of my ſoul; therefore I hold ſacred every place that has been hallowed by their preſence, and I am angry that others do not too. But my anger is unavailable. The new poſſeſſor (why did your father let the premiſes?) has already cut down the arbor, and is level-

ling the mount in the garden. You cannot think how it vexes me; 'tis eraſing a record of my joys.

" My uncle has ſent for me. I did not think he knew I was up, for 'tis paſt midnight. I go to attend him.

" Ah! How is the good man deceived! The ſervant who waits with him had informed him I was yet up; and he ſent for me to adviſe me not to follow my ſtudies too intenſely, leſt it ſhould injure my health; for he fancied, he ſaid, I was not ſo cheerful of late as formerly.

" Alas! I ſtudy nothing—I engage in nothing—I am an idleton. No friendly partiality ſtimulates now my progreſs; the ſmile of my Linny no more encourages my endeavours.—Apropos. It is not, I think, ſo much want of capacity, as want of an incitement adapted to our ſeveral diſpoſitions, that renders many of us very dull beings. There was once a time when I was thought ingenious; but I am now ſtupid.

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I have not inclination to attempt any thing; becauſe it will ſcarcely now meet the applauſe of thoſe I eſteem; and the praiſe of thoſe I eſteem not, like ill-prepared confects, is fulſome to me.—But I muſt conclude. The moon is retired over the hills to G——. O that I were wafted on its pale beam! Or that I could but be this paper, which ere long will be folded in your hands! I envy it, Linny. Will you not ſurvey it with pleaſure? You will perhaps breathe a ſigh on it.—O balmy breath! let it not be waſted on the inſenſible.—But how contradictory are my wiſhes! I ſhould be hurt if you read the effuſions of my ſoul with indifference!

"But ſhall I addreſs to you only my complaints? No—My uncle is mending; and, as I ſaid before, I ought to be happy; as I have the hope ere long of enjoying once more the converſation of the friends of my heart, that our ſouls may again mix like the flame of theſe united tapers. What ſhall I do with them? Can I ſeparate,

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can I extinguiſh what I have conſecrated as the emblem of our affection? No; they ſhall burn by me while I ſleep—while I dream of my Linny——. Ye guardian angels of the night! witneſſes alike of the fervency and purity of my love! contemn ye not my weakneſs. He who endowed with ſublimity your exiſtence, alſo furniſhed mine with theſe ſenſibilities. I *am* weak indeed; but I wiſh not to be otherwiſe, methinks, even were it to be what you are.

"My dear Linny, good night.

"WM. WANLEY PENSON."

"Conſtitutionally fanciful I ſee," ſaid the lawyer. "He who benighted himſelf in helping a jack-aſs out of the ditch, and he who wrote this letter, one might have ſworn were the ſame perſon, without making enquiries.—But, come, Mrs. Barnes, proceed—"

"Sir," ſaid Betty, "that he was naturally

rally rather of a penſive turn I have already hinted: but he was once gay and cheerful, to what he has been latterly.—Some diſagreeable occurrences, which you ſhall preſently be made acquainted with, have conduced to tinge his diſpoſition with a melancholy not wholly inherent.

It was but a few months after the date of the above letter, when his uncle, who had been riding for the benefit of the air, was thrown from his horſe, and received ſuch a contuſion in his head, that he was taken up inſenſible, and never ſpoke a coherent ſentence afterward. He called, it ſeems, frequently on his nephew, and often mentioned his will: but his meaning was not gueſſed at till after his demiſe, which was on the morning of the third day.

At length, however, his papers being ſearched, two wills were found; one unfiniſhed and unexecuted, and which appeared to have been written by himſelf during the

the illneſs before mentioned; and in which, it ſeems, he intended to bequeath the bulk of his fortune to his nephew: the other executed in due form, but of a date eighteen years prior to his deceaſe, wherein he had deviſed the whole he might happen to die poſſeſſed of to a diſtant relation. The reaſon of which was this:—His ſiſter (Mr. Penſon's mother) having married without his conſent, and contrary to his advice, and himſelf having no children, nor a likelihood of any—he, as ſoon as the form could be gone through, in the height of his reſentment, paſſed a fine on the family eſtate, and by this will gave it to a diſtant branch of the family, with all his other effects.

I have read of men who made it a point, on finding themſelves angered, not to *ſpeak* till their anger had ſubſided; and if mankind in general would ſtep a ſtep farther, and make it a law to themſelves not to *act* till they found themſelves uninfluenced by

by reſentment, it would ſave them the mortification of many repentances. Old Mr. Wanley was one inſtance of this, among a thouſand others; for had he been more deliberate, he had not felt the unpleaſantneſs of ſelf-reproach, nor have reduced the perſon of all the world he beſt loved to the neceſſity of mixing blame with his aſhes.

For, ſome time after he had taken theſe haſty ſteps, whether the impulſe of nature prevailed, or whether he found his brother-in-law, though his inferior in fortune, yet a man he need not be aſhamed to acknowledge for his relation, I can't ſay; but his reſentment gradually ſubſided; and when his little nephew was preſented to him, he was ſo delighted with him, that, ſo ſoon as he was capable of leaving his nurſe, he took him to reſide with him at N——, and bred him up in the manner I have already deſcribed: indeed he was, uniformly, ſo exceedingly fond of him, that no one doubted but he deſigned him for his heir. But whether

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at firſt the neceſſity of revoking what his reſentment had dictated, occurred to him; or whether he could pleaſe himſelf in the diſpoſal of his effects; whether as he grew in years he grew indolent; or whether he conceived the idea, frequently prevalent with people in the decline of life, that a final adjuſtment of his affairs was bringing death to his door (an event which when younger perhaps he leſs apprehended)—whichſoever of theſe prevailed witn him to defer the neceſſary and evidently intended revocation, is uncertain; whilſt it *is* certain that he did defer it till a fatal accident put it ſuddenly out of his power: and Mr. Penſon, his favourite, to the ſurpriſe of every body, was left without a penny.

This was undoubtedly a very ſevere ſtroke to the young gentleman.

The loſs of his uncle, his friend, his preceptor, the guide and patron of his youth, taken from him by a means ſo melancholy, may be ſuppoſed to have affect-

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ed him deeply; and the having that fortune diverted from him which he had been taught to expect, undoubtedly rendered his ſituation not only awkward and uncomfortable, but afflictive, as he was now by no means equal in pecuniary conſiderations to my young miſtreſs.

All his expectations cloſing thus adverſely at N——, he came to reſide with his father at G—— (the place of our new abode), ſoon after the interment of his uncle: but, I believe from mere dejection, did not attempt to approach our houſe.

He knew my maſter's diſpoſition, which, to ſay truth, was what the world calls prudent; and he gueſſed, I ſuppoſe, what treatment he was now likely to meet with from him: therefore, as contempt was a thing he had been unuſed to, and conſcious he could not patiently brook it, he forbore to provoke it, by avoiding our whole family. How much this muſt have diſtreſſed him, I leave the ſenſible to imagine.

What paſſed among our folks I know not; but Miſs Bountly ſoon became viſibly unhappy; and ſhe had none now to unboſom herſelf to, for her brother was gone to reſide with a merchant at ——: and Miſs Brudenell (an amiable young lady, and of a diſpoſition congenial with her own, with whom ſhe had contracted the moſt friendly intimacy ſince our reſidence in G—) was abſent on a viſit to an uncle in —— ſhire.

To me therefore only could ſhe diſcloſe her unhappineſs, on account of Wanley's abſenting himſelf: this at length ſhe did (for adverſity of every kind finds a palliative in communication, eſpecially when a remedy appears hopeleſs); and alſo hinted her ſuſpicions that, if he ſhould attempt to revive the intimacy, he would not meet with his uſual reception from her father. But I believe, notwithſtanding the obſervation I have juſt made, ſhe was not communicative to me merely to palliate her uneaſineſs; but hoped

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to make me inſtrumental towards remedying it; for, after this confidence, I was frequently ſent on frivolous meſſages to Mr. Penſon's, merely to fathom the young gentleman's ſentiments, and (as Miſs Bountly was uncertain of the conduct her father might have already purſued) to diſcover, if poſſible, whether or not any thing had paſſed between Mr. Bountly and her lover, that had prevented the latter, in the midſt of ſo ſtrict a connection, from even once preſenting himſelf before her, or any way accounting for his behaviour.

In the execution of theſe commiſſions, I was ſoon convinced that his conduct was not the conſequence of a diminiſhed affection, but of diſtreſs of mind ariſing from his circumſtances. It is the misfortune of ſenſibility to feel a diſparagement with peculiar force. It was Wanley's misfortune: he ſeemed to conſider himſelf as one ſo degraded, as abſolutely to inhibit the idea of his ever more aſpiring to Miſs Bountly; and evidently

laboured to reconcile himſelf to that conſideration. He would ſometimes, if I happened not to mention her in the courſe of my meſſage, enquire for her with a bridled eagerneſs; but never once preſumed to tender her his remembrance, much leſs to ſolicit my conveyance of a line: which, by the way, was what Miſs Bountly not only wiſhed, but expected of him, in conſequence of her affording him ſuch opportunities: but he was far from interpreting her overtures in his own favour; or rather, I believe, he would not ſuffer himſelf to interpret them at all, for then he could not have miſſed their meaning: but as my meſſages were oſtenſibly made to Mrs. Penſon (his mother), he ſeemed to wiſh to conſider them in no other light; and, except his emotion betrayed him when I occaſionally mentioned Miſs Bountly, he would walk about with his arms folded, as a perſon to whom every thing was indifferent.

But his countenance was not the countenance of indifference, 'twas that of diſguiſed inquietude.

inquietude. I pitied him; and I believe, had he afforded me opportunity, I ſhould have endeavoured to have relieved him, if the information I could have given would, to one in his ſituation, have adminiſtered relief.

As to his parents, as they had never witneſſed the intimacy between him and Miſs Linny, nor knew that his connection in our family amounted to any thing more than friendſhip, they attributed the whole of his behaviour to the loſs of his uncle, and the adverſeneſs of his fate.

But however he endeavoured to diſguiſe it, his conſtitution ſoon became unequal to the conflict of his mind. He fell ſick.

It was not long ere the intelligence of his indiſpoſition reached us. When it did, I was immediately diſpatched, not only to enquire for, but if poſſible to ſee him, under pretence of borrowing a book, which Miſs Bountly pretended to have forgot the title of, but which contained ſome

particulars which had ſtruck her fancy, and which I was taught to deſcribe.

I found him ſitting pale and ſolitary in a retired room, with a table, and pen and ink by him, and ſeveral ſcraps of paper lying about, ſome on the table, and ſome on the floor.

I enquired for his complaint. He made light of it: but his look contradicted his tongue. I then delivered my meſſage; for, in the midſt of my regard for the young gentleman, I was not directly for foregoing the punctilios of my ſex. Women are accuſtomed from their infancy to give falſe colouring to their actions: this cuſtom becomes habit; and ſo ſtrong, that we cannot tell how to admit ſcarcely our virtues to appear with their real face.

That Miſs Bountly loved Penſon, was certain; and that ſhe compaſſionated his ſiniſter fortune, and wiſhed to conſole him, was equally ſo: but, nevertheleſs, her delicacy, or that feminine pride inherent I believe in the ſex, 'which will be wooed,

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and not unſought be won,' would not ſuffer either her love or her compaſſion to appear unbidden as ſuch before him, till he ſhould himſelf think proper to explain the motives of his extraordinary demeanour; which, though they might be gueſſed at, were however doubtful.

Nevertheleſs, though I was not for abſolutely abandoning thoſe points of which we are in general ſo tenacious; yet while Mr. Penſon was gone into an adjoining cloſet to find the book I had requeſted, I was caſting about for means to reconcile my regard for him with the reſpect due to my miſtreſs: indeed, I really thought they were both too ſcrupulous, and ſpun themſelves miſery from their own too nice notions: but ſcrupuloſity, they ſay, is at once the misfortune and happineſs of the delicate; for thoſe whom trifles can teaſe, trifles can alſo pleaſe."

" Why, you make a mere monkey of

delicacy, Mrs. Barnes," interrupted the lawyer: "tenacious of a fig-ſtem, or ſtarting from a ſnail. But, prithee, now," continued he, "cannot you ſelect the moſt ſtriking parts of your ſtory, without troubling us with theſe dull connecting paragraphs?"

"Ah, ha," cried Betty laughing; "a Frenchman right! No matter for the ſhirt, ſo the ruffles be but there!—But, Sir, as well as lace and tambour, a pair of ruffles cannot be made without ſome *plain* work; and when they are made, what figure do they cut, unleſs they are tacked to a ſhirt! But you are like Mr. Selby there, who ſays he ſhould like very well to viſit ſeveral remarkable places he has heard of, if it were not for the irkſome roads he muſt paſs in order to reach them."

"But Mrs. Barnes," replied the lawyer, "Triſtram Shandy had an art of hitting pat upon a thing, without adjuſting, and aiming,

aiming, and preparing for half an hour firſt—ſuppoſe you endeavoured a little to imitate him?"

"He!—a ſmutty fellow!" cried Betty: "I imitate him!—No indeed—I am no Triſtram Shandy, Sir."

"I believe it," laughed the lawyer; "ſo, pray, proceed your own way."

"So I muſt," replied Betty; "or not at all.

"We left Mr. Penſon in the cloſet, ſearching for the book, whilſt I was endeavouring to plan ſome method of bringing him 'in credit with himſelf,' without ſacrificing my miſtreſs's punctilio: but the ſcraps of paper that lay about preſently diverted my attention. Curioſity, you will cry. No matter—I picked one of them up—it was inſcribed with theſe lines:

"Were Celia ſick, could Strephon ſtay
From her he lov'd ſo long away?——
Serenely could his boſom play,
If her he lov'd in anguiſh lay?

O no.—The vital ſtreams which ſwell
Swiftly along each throbbing vein,
Recoiling to their ſource, would tell
His trembling ſoul of Celia's pain.

But Celia—No; correct the thought—
Celia is—all that Celia ought:

For ev'n kind Heav'n itſelf, howe'er
It pity man's degraded ſtate,
Steps not from its exalted ſphere,
To mark the miſeries of his fate."

I had no ſooner peruſed theſe, but I concluded it would be no very capital theft, if I took them with me; and my mind, occupied on another ſubject, having foregone the completion of the ſcheme it was previouſly meditating, I took the book from the languid hand of poor Wanley with an awkward curteſy, and returning to Miſs Bountly, gave her the pilfered ſcrawl.

I have already ſaid that Miſs Bountly was made of the moſt ſuſceptible materials. She read the verſes; her eyes ſuffuſed—"'Tis a falſe concluſion," ſaid ſhe: "Heaven *does* mark the miſeries of degraded man,

man, and ſooths them too; and ſo will thy Linny *thine*. Betty," continued ſhe, "my ſcrupuloſity has added torture to a wounded heart: I ought to have ſpared it—I know its delicacy, and I might have gueſſed its motives. I muſt ſee Wanley. My doubts are removed; even my pride is ſatisfied, or rather anticipates ſatisfaction in that I will not be outdone in generoſity. See, Betty, how he ſublimes even my narrowneſs!"——That ſame evening ſhe made an excuſe to go out, and, taking me with her, repaired to Mr. Penſon's. The father was from home, but the mother received us kindly.

After the firſt compliments had paſſed, Miſs Bountly, with a moſt engaging frankneſs, told her, that hearing her ſon was indiſpoſed, however the ſentiment might be conſtrued, ſhe could no otherwiſe reconcile her conduct to what ſhe thought was due to the peculiar intimacy ſubſiſting between her and Mr. Wanley, than by begging leave

leave to pay him, as occaſion might admit, that attention perſonally which human nature, in its oppreſſed moments, finds ſo conſolatory, and has a right to expect from its friends.

The old lady's reply was conciſe, but at once ſenſible and polite. She inſtantly led us to the room where her ſon was ſitting.

His back was toward us as we entered; and his head was reclined on his hand, in the attitude of dejection.

His mother announced Miſs Bountly. He ſtarted at the name, and aroſe with a kind of languid alertneſs to meet her. But a conſciouſneſs of his inferiority was inſtantly viſible in his pale countenance, and ſeemed to check his advances. In ſhort, he was manifeſtly at a loſs how to addreſs her: but ſhe, familiarly taking his hand, inſiſted on his reſuming his ſeat, and drawing another chair, ſat herſelf down by him. Mrs. Penſon being called out, they remained ſilent for ſome minutes; till at

length, mutually raiſing their eyes, and fixing them on each other, they both burſt into tears. The effuſion of ſenſibility, like ſmoke, will frequently affect the eyes of thoſe preſent, who, however, may not feel the warmth that produces either the one or the other. This was my caſe—my tears kept pace with theirs, whilſt my heart only wiſhed to partake the tenderneſs of their ſituation.

But after the firſt moments, it occurring to me that probably my preſence reſtrained their tongues, though it could not their eyes, and wiſhing to render their interview as ſatisfactory as poſſible, I preſently, under colour of having dropt my handkerchief, found means to retire. What paſſed between them afterwards, in the courſe of an hour which they remained together, I cannot ſay; but, from the conſequences, it was evident that Miſs Bountly, as I did not doubt but ſhe would, found it practicable to remove her lover's diffidence, and alſo

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(as it is well known that ſcruples oppoſite to inclination are eaſily foiled) to reconcile him again to the meeting her affection; for a day or two after, he, being then much better, called at our houſe.

Mrs. Bountly, who truly eſteemed him, received him with pleaſure, and miſs with her uſual frankneſs and familiarity. In ſhort, this viſit gave him ſuch courage (for my maſter was not at home), that the next day he repeated it; and was ſitting with Miſs Bountly in the front parlour, when my maſter entered.

Wanley aroſe at his entrance, and, endeavouring to aſſume an eaſy deportment (in which he but ill ſucceeded), accoſted him in a ſtyle friendly, but rather more diſtant than uſual; which my maſter returned only with a ſlight inclination of his head, and a ſhort 'Your ſervant, Sir;' at the ſame inſtant retiring out of the room.

Going into a back apartment, he preſently called Miſs Bountly to him. Wanley immediately took the hint, and aroſe to

to depart. My young lady deſired him to wait her return; but in vain. He preſſed her hand between his; but attempted not to ſalute her; and retired with an air more haughty than ever before I had ſeen him aſſume.

But before he could reach the door, Miſs Bountly was with her father, who called for her vociferouſly; and who, when ſhe approached him, ſaid with a ſtern voice, and audible enough, I am ſure, to reach the young gentleman's ear, who was juſt paſſing into the court—"Melinda, let me have no fooling with that young fellow, I deſire you. If he viſits as a common acquaintance, 'tis very well: I ſhould think, indeed, his uſual prudence would teach him to ſuit himſelf to his ſituation. *You* and *he* are not *now* on an equal footing."—And ſo ſaying, he ſtalked off without waiting a reply.

I immediately ſtept into the apartment, and found the young lady ſunk into a chair,

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in a ſtate rather, I think of ſtupidity, than any thing elſe; for, though ſhe expected ſomething of this kind to take place, ſhe did not imagine her father would have been ſo peremptory in his commands, nor ſo harſh in his expreſſion.

I ſaid what I could to conſole her, but to little purpoſe. Next day I was ſent with a billet to Mr. Penſon, to excuſe her father's raſhneſs, and to deſire he would make uſe of the privilege of an acquaintance, in continuing his viſits.

He received me now with a—I know not what—jealous dignity, not uſual to him: but taking the letter, he kiſſed it with fervency: nevertheleſs (after tracing the length of the room two or three times in viſible agitation) only returned for anſwer, 'that he could endure miſery, but could not court contempt.'

What violence he did himſelf in making this reply, I can only gueſs. As to Miſs Bountly, its effects on her I could trace with

with greater certainty: they were in the extreme. Her pride took arms againſt her affection, and endeavoured to eſtabliſh reſentment: but whether reaſon, ſtepping in to the aid of affection, inſinuated that the ſame feelings which a tender occaſion could rap to an ecſtaſy, were equally ſenſible of an adverſe occurrence; or whether affection (which I am moſt inclined to believe) triumphed without reaſoning at all, I cannot poſitively decide: but be it as it may, affection ſome how or other *did* triumph over pride and all its auxiliaries; for the day after I was ſent, *again*, to negociate a commercial treaty. I know not whether a woman's affection be ſtronger than that of a man; or whether her ideas in general being leſs divided, occaſion her ſuffering it to act with leſs controul; but it is pretty evident that where one of my ſex is touched with the tender paſſion, it muſt be a great obſtruction indeed which ſhe will conſider as inſurmountable in the indulgence of it.

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The credentials I now bore contained, firſt, gentle upbraidings; complaints of injuſtice, in making the daughter the ſufferer, for the fault of the father; remonſtrances on the ſubject of delicacy, requeſting to be prevented from a further breach of the rules of decorum; profeſſions of the moſt diſintereſted regard; and, finally, overtures of meeting occaſionally (till a period more auſpicious ſhould render it unneceſſary) at the houſe of a friend.

The anſwer to this was couched in the moſt grateful terms, and full of the tendereſt ſentiments; but an abſolute rejection of the propoſals.—'His reaſon,' he ſaid, 'was at war with his affection: his virtue oppoſed his inclination. He could not be reconciled to the idea of intentionally decoying a child from the duty it owed its parent. He could not be ſo ſelfiſh as to admit the wiſh that the object almoſt of his adoration ſhould, to gratify him, degrade herſelf in the opinion of the world.

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The delicacy of his paſſion too was hurt. Mankind would perhaps attribute to him ſordid views and intereſted motives. Finally, his pride was wounded. Whilſt no one upbraided his want of fortune, he felt his inferiority moſt ſenſibly: but to be contemned profeſſedly on that account, had awakened a certain conſciouſneſs in his breaſt, which would not ſuffer him to ſubmit to the meanneſs of concealing his actions. He, however, catched at the hope, that ſome period would prove more auſpicious; and ſeemed to conſole himſelf with the reflection, that time may yet be his friend, and (as all his endeavours would be ſtretched to that end only) afford him an opportunity of regaining ſuch a ſituation as would excuſe his again telling Miſs Bountly of the ſincerity and purity of his affection."

Indeed, he did at this period urge his father very much, it ſeems, to ſend him to the univerſity, to finiſh his education; as the profeſſion he thought himſelf beſt

calculated for, was the clerical. But his father would never hear of it. 'What!' ſays he, 'ſpend a thouſand pounds in qualifying a man to procure with hard labour a ſtipend of twenty pounds a year! No, no, Bill,' (for though the young gentleman was always called Wanley at N——, out of complaiſance to his uncle; yet the father, from oppoſite motives, never called him any thing but Bill)—'No, no, Bill,' continued he, 'thou ſhalt not pray for thoſe that are too lazy to pray for themſelves, at a leſs rate than a tinker will clink old pots. No, no!'

But to return to Miſs Bountly, who, when ſhe found, after repeated experiments, her father obſtinately intereſted, and her lover rigidly punctilious (a fault which many in this age of libertiniſm, ſhould they admit its poſſibility, would hardly be induced to pardon), was ſo affected thereby, as in a ſhort time viſibly to be injured in her health.

Wanley now for ſome months was moſtly from home: but whether, in purſuance of what he hinted to Miſs Bountly, he were endeavouring to explore the tracks of fortune, or whether he were tranſacting buſineſs for his father, my memory at this diſtance of time does not ſerve me to determine; but during his abſence, and probably in ſome ſort accelerated by it, Miſs Bountly's complaint gained ſo much on her, that her father, who might have gueſſed; and probably did gueſs, the cauſe of her diſorder, but who, perhaps, fooliſhly imagined a cure might be effected otherwiſe than by removing the cauſe, thought it neceſſary to have the advice of a phyſician.

The phyſician accordingly attended, and his principal preſcription was change of air; with which my young lady, I believe, would very willingly have complied, had not Wanley returned to G——ſoon after: but, in conſequence of this (or, if it was not the conſequence of this, I do not know

what it was the conſequence of), ſhe obſtinately oppoſed being conveyed to any great diſtance: nay, ſhe did not like to be removed at all. There is a certain pleaſure (though I think it is moſt like the irritation of a ſore) in being near the object of one's affection, even though debarred its company.

But my young lady was now confined to her room. Wanley, on his return, ſoon heard of her indiſpoſition. His conduct towards her was not the effect of a lukewarm affection, but of an *exceſs*, chaſtened by a ſenſe of his inferiority, and latterly reined in by a pride, originating from a conſciouſneſs of rectitude, and cheriſhed by a hope that, adverſe as fortune now was, he ſhould yet find a time when the inducing her to enable him once more to evince his diſintereſtedneſs and his affection, would not be impracticable.

But the idea of his Linny's danger deſtroying this hope, his pride inſtantly gave way: the mere conceit of rectitude was

unequal to its ſupport. He came directly to our houſe.

My maſter met him accidentally at the door, and, in anſwer to his enquiries, informed him that his daughter was indeed ill; but he hoped the worſt was paſt. Wanley, hurt as he was by my maſter's forbiddingneſs, who never ventured the compliment of aſking him to walk in, ſeemed however loath to depart, till my maſter, in a tone rather churliſh, added, that Miſs Bountly was too ill to ſee company. Wanley then, aſſuming all the loftineſs he was capable of, with a kind of half bow left the houſe.

And now only think how differently things can be taken from what they are intended to mean. As I paſſed by the parlour door, ſoon after the forementioned incident, I overheard my maſter and miſtreſs engaged in a warmiſh altercation. 'Your concluſions are equally raſh and groundleſs, Sir,' was the fag end of my miſtreſs's argument. 'Don't tell me,' replied the other;

'I ſay 'twas inſolent to call at ſuch a time as this. What! I ſuppoſe he thinks himſelf of conſequence enough to cure her?'

Now I'll venture to anſwer for poor Penſon, that he was poſſeſſed of no ſuch vanity; but that, urged by the exquiſiteneſs of his ſenſibility, he came to ſee the object of his firſt regard, anxious to the laſt degree for her ſafety. And in this light I was ſilly enough to repreſent his viſit to my young lady, together with the converſation I had overheard in conſequence of it; the latter of which, you may think, did not tend to alleviate her diſorder.

And now, ſeeing her grow daily worſe and worſe, and no likelihood of any thing occurring that could effectually relieve her (for, as I was more in her confidence, I was a better judge than any one elſe about her, of what was moſt likely to adminiſter relief), I reſolved on taking the liberty of ſtating the whole of the caſe we were in, by letter, to young Mr. Bountly (who I have already

ſaid

ſaid was then reſident at ——), as the only probable means of bringing things again into a happy channel.

He, as I then gueſſed, and afterwards found, was quite unacquainted with every thing that had paſſed, or rather that had not paſſed, between Mr. Penſon and our family, ſince we left N——; and as he dearly loved his ſiſter, and regarded Penſon with little leſs affection, his anxiety both for the one and the other brought him down to G—— in leſs than a week after I had ſent off my letter.

My maſter and miſtreſs were greatly ſurpriſed at his unexpected arrival: and, as they knew nothing of the information he had received, they were certainly at a loſs to account for the frown that lowered on his brow, as he entered the houſe.

Young Mr. Bountly was of a temper much more impetuous than Mr. Penſon. In caſe of a ſtorm, he was not for yielding to it, but facing it out.

He was hardly entered, before he aſked rather ſternly for his ſiſter. My maſter and miſtreſs jointly informed him how ill ſhe was, endeavouring to excuſe themſelves for not writing to him of her indiſpoſition, by ſaying they were loath to make him uneaſy; but had however at length reſolved, and were then about to have acquainted him with it.

He made them no reply; but aſked haſtily if Wanley were at G——. My miſtreſs anſwered, he was. "Will you let him know I am here?" ſaid he. "Had you not better ſee your ſiſter firſt?" ſaid the father.

"No," replied the other, abruptly: "I can ſee her with him."

My maſter's colour inſtantly roſe:—"Why, Tom," ſaid he, "don't you know the affair between them is quite off?"

"No," replied the other; "nor do I wiſh to know it."

And now a very hot contention enſued, which

which laſted near an hour; wherein the young gentleman ſometimes repreſented, in very harſh terms, the meanneſs of his father's ſpirit, in diſcarding a perſon of ſuch merit as Wanley Penſon on the ſcore of fortune; and, at other times, in the moſt pathetic manner, the unhappineſs and critical ſituation of his ſiſter. In ſhort, what by invectives and perſuaſions, after a hard-fought battle of words, wherein he was occaſionally, though for family reaſons rather indirectly, ſupported by his mother, he prevailed ſo completely over his father as to procure permiſſion for Penſon again to viſit his ſiſter; ſtipulating, at the ſame time, that he ſhould be treated by the reſt of the family with his uſual deference.

This obtained, as ſuddenly alert as a ſchoolboy, whom the ſtroke of the clock relieves from his taſk, he darted out of the room, and haſtening to Mr. Penſon's, ſoon returned with his young friend, "nothing loath,"

loath," in order to introduce him to his beloved ſiſter.

The interview, I dare ſay, was a very tender one; but, as I was not preſent, it is not in my power to deſcribe it.

After this, Wanley frequented our houſe as he had done formerly, and became again like one of the family; Miſs Bountly's health being in a courſe of time perfectly re-eſtabliſhed.

Here I ſhall paſs over a conſiderable period, which was fruitleſsly employed by Mr. Penſon, in endeavouring to ſeek out a line of life anſwerable to his views, and ſuited to his inclination, by only obſerving, that nothing of conſequence occurred, except that the lovers, if poſſible, grew more and more enamoured of each other.

But happineſs, how fleeting!
In trackleſs air 'tis blown!
'Fore miſery retreating,
'Tis vaniſh'd ere 'tis known!

I am

I am now approaching that part of Mr. Penſon's hiſtory, which will account, moſt of all, for that dejectedneſs and ſolemn fancifulneſs (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) which you have noticed in him. The adverſity of fortune certainly lowered his ſpirits, and rendered them more eaſily aſſailable; but it required ſomething additional quite to reduce them.

But you muſt excuſe me if I do not paſs over this part with the ſame lightneſs of heart as I have the preceding; for it is a part which touched me too nearly not to affect me. I loved my young lady with the ſincereſt affection. How could I do otherwiſe, when ſhe treated me more like a ſiſter than a ſervant? She was the ſweeteſt, beſt of women. I cannot, at this diſtance of time, recollect her with indifference: indeed I never ſhall. Every thing relative to her will be ever dear to me.—But I will proceed.

My maſter and miſtreſs, and Miſs Bountly,

ly, had received a preſſing invitation from the merchant with whom young Mr. Bountly reſided, to ſpend a few weeks with him at his country ſeat on the coaſt of —.

Mrs. Bountly being rather infirm, though not really ill, was averſe to the ſcheme: but, as her ſon continued to urge it very ſtrongly, ſhe perſuaded Mr. Bountly and her daughter to accept the invitation on their parts, and undertake her apology.

Miſs Bountly conſented, as Mr. Penſon was to make a third in their party; and the time of their departure was appointed. But the day before that on which they were to ſet out, as Mr. Penſon's father was walking in one of his granaries, the floor above, being too much loaded, gave way, and cruſhed him ſo that, when he was taken out, he exhibited very little ſigns of life: and though, after a while, theſe ſigns increaſed, and afforded ſome diſtant hopes; yet, in ſuch a ſituation, it is not to be ſuppoſed that his ſon, whoſe ſoul was equally ſenſible

in

in all its affections, could be ſo unnatural as to leave him.

This affair equally diſcompoſed and diſconcerted us. Miſs Bountly would fain now have given up the journey: but there were ſeveral circumſtances which would have rendered ſuch a receſſion pointedly unpolite; eſpecially as her father, who was reſolved to proceed, declared againſt giving countenance to any excuſe ſhe ſhould wiſh to ſend by him. She therefore was obliged to ſet off, though with a very unwilling heart.

She took a peculiarly tender leave of her mother and me, and ſtill more ſo of Mr. Penſon. I never ſaw her ſo much affected; nor did I ever myſelf experience ſuch a load on my ſpirits: though I little thought *then* what a long leave ſhe was taking of us.

After their departure, Mr. Penſon, whoſe father for a conſiderable time could not be ſaid to grow better, though he did not grow

grow worſe, came daily to our houſe, not only to make enquiries after intelligence from the abſent, but in a familiar way as uſual: for our houſe was again become a ſecond home to him; conſequently his coming in at any hour, or however abrupt, was never matter of ſurpriſe to us.

Miſs Bountly and her father had now been abſent about three weeks, when one morning he came ſuddenly into the parlour where my miſtreſs was ſewing, with a paper crumpled up in his hand.

I thought he looked pale and diſcompoſed as he entered, and aſked him how his father did.—He juſt articulated the word, "Bad"—and walked up to the fire-place.

"Not worſe, is he?" ſaid my miſtreſs, who was working at the window.

"No"—was all he anſwered: and he flung himſelf into a chair that ſtood by the fire.

His back was then towards me; but his eyes

eyes ſeemed fixed againſt the chimney-piece, like a perſon in deep muſing, whilſt he twirled about the paper he held in his hand in ſuch a manner as indicated he did not attend to what he was doing: but, as he was frequently apt to be loſt in thought (eſpecially of late), neither my miſtreſs nor myſelf took any particular notice of his behaviour now.

My buſineſs called me into the next room: but, as I afterwards learnt from my miſtreſs, he ſat in the poſition I have deſcribed ſome minutes, till that cat which awhile ſince you marked his attention to (and which was a creature my young lady had a particular fancy for), going towards the fire, rubbed itſelf fondly againſt his legs. He ſmoothed it down its back with his hand—the creature leaped on his knee—he again ſmoothed it, and ſighed deeply. The ſigh attracted the notice of my miſtreſs—ſhe looked round at him—his lips ſeemed convulſed, and his whole counte-

nance

nance in violent emotion, as though he was labouring, yet unable, to reſtrain himſelf from a burſt of grief.

The cat, as though ſenſible of his ſorrow, climbed up his breaſt, and rubbed its head againſt his face. He put it down gently on his knee, and fixing his eyes eagerly on it, with a half-choaked accent ſighed, 'Ah poor puſs!' the tears then trickling down his cheeks.

My miſtreſs was alarmed, and haſtily aſked what was the matter; but in the ſame inſtant flinging himſelf back in the chair, and folding his arms, he exclaimed, "I cannot—great God, I cannot."

My miſtreſs, yet more alarmed, again demanded what ailed him: on which he ſuddenly ſtarted up, and, flinging the paper he held in his hand into her lap, ruſhed out of the room.

I was returning through the hall into the parlour, and met him. He looked the image of deſpair. I ſtopped him. He would

would have paſſed me. But I took his hand.—Apprehenſion outſteps ceremony.—"What is the matter?—Dear Sir, what is the matter?" ſaid I.

He gazed on me in ſilence. I ſaw the undried tear on his face, and now a freſh flow burſt from his eyes.

"Heavens, Sir!" repeated I—"what is the matter"? He was yet ſilent; continuing to view me with a look equally earneſt and unheedful: but preſently he cried, with a tone compoſed of the plaintive and the indignant, "cruelly inconſiderate! What do they take me for?—Conſolation from *me!* O I, *I* am the moſt miſerable of all!"

I was now confirmed in my apprehenſions, that ſomething extraordinary had happened; but not knowing what, I again demanded in trembling expectation—"Dear Mr. Penſon, tell me."—But he, inattentive to my queſtion, ſnatched his hands from mine, and wringing them together as he caſt

his eyes wildly towards the ceiling, cried, "O had I been there!—Had I been but there!—Cruel waves! Ye ſhould not have divided us!"

Then, as though he had ſuddenly recollected himſelf, he again turned his eyes on me, and, catching my hand, ſaid, with a voice he in vain endeavoured to render compoſed, "Betty, your dear miſtreſs—did not you love her?"—And, without waiting an anſwer, continued—"Yes, you loved my Linny!—You knew, and who that knew—" but he could not proceed.

His manner and the ſuſpicions I began to entertain alarmed me. A ſad preſage filled my eyes. The tears flowed afreſh from his.—"We'll weep together, Betty," ſaid he; and, without giving me time to ſpeak, added, "I'll love you too, for my Linny loved you. Did ſhe not give you a parting kiſs? Ah! there—there," continued he, looking eagerly on my lips, "there did my angel breathe a farewel!—That kiſs muſt be

be mine—O give it me—give it me," cried he with quickneſs, wildly ſaluting me; and then as haſtily quitting me, ruſhed out of the houſe.

I ſtood ſome moments immoveable. I preſaged ſome fatal misfortune; but could not connect Mr. Penſon's disjointed exclamations, ſo as to form thence any circumſtantial idea.

In this uncertainty, I moved mechanically towards the parlour, where I had left my miſtreſs. I found her ſunk lifeleſs on the floor. I ran to her, and, ſeeing her condition, ran as faſt back again to get aſſiſtance.

After ſome time ſhe revived. My fears on her account abating as life began to return, I had leiſure to examine a letter that laid by the ſide of her chair.—I took it up, and, it being already open, I read it. I have it now in my hand.

"To W. Wanley Penson.

"DEAR Penſon, my ever valued friend, and never more ſo than at this moment, with what words ſhall I addreſs thee? If I know any thing of thee—and ſurely I do know thee—I am about to plant a dagger in thy heart—a dagger that has transfixed mine already, and which too muſt reach that of my poor unhappy mother.

"Think not, my dear Wanley, I am inconſiderate of thee; no—whilſt my boſom feels its own ſorrows, it will ſympathiſe in thine. But my poor mother!—Nature in her is, alas! feeble, except in its affections. How will ſhe ſupport the ſtroke? Wanley, do thou ſoften it to her. She loves thee. Do thou comfort her; do thou uphold her, leſt her declining age ſink under it. If thou doſt not ſupport her, to whom can I apply?

"But, alas! I tantalize thee through a reluctance to wound. But it muſt be—then why do I heſitate? Yet how ſhall I—Ah,

Penſon,

Penſon, I have loſt my ſiſter!——And *ſo* loſt.

" Reaſon, dear Wanley, has a little recovered itſelf.—I know thou wilt exclaim —" And what have I not loſt?"—True, my Wanley, I allow a paroxyſm to thy grief: but what will avail the indulgence? My heart bleeds while I write: yet ſhall it ſet thine an example of fortitude, which if thine imitate, then wilt thou be enabled to conſole my mother. For what greater inſtance can I give thee than that *now*, whilſt one half of my heart is torn away with my dear loſt ſiſter, I am ſo far maſter of the other, as to oblige it to attend ſuch a circumſtantial recital, as I am about to give thee, of that loſs.—Remember, Wanley, I am her brother; and in that remembrance include what I would wiſh thee to be to her parent—a comforter.

" Thus then I bring my heart to the proof. On Thurſday the 12th inſtant, it had been agreed by the party previouſly

aſſembled here, to take a boat, and, to deverſify the ſcene a little, ſail round to —; there to ſpend the afternoon, and to return in the evening.

" It was a fine clear day. My father, ſiſter, Mr. Oldſworth, with whom I reſide, his lady, another gentleman, and two more ladies ſet off; and after a pleaſant voyage of two hours and a half arrived ſafe at —.

"How unhappy, that I could not accompany them!—Some preſſing buſineſs of Mr. Oldſworth's would not permit me. Yet why ſay I unhappy?—Alas! what could I have done, had I been there?

" In the evening, after having ſpent the afternoon agreeably, they re-embarked and ſteered homewards. The ſky, it ſeems, was ſerene; ſcarcely a breeze was ſtirring, conſequently the ſea was moſt beautifully calm; when the moon riſing ſublimely over the liquid expanſe, (whilſt yet the ſun's declining ray empurpled the waters), caſt ſuch a glow over the ſilent ſcene as tempted

them, in order to enjoy it, to put further off upon the ocean, than they had intended, or than the courſe they were ſteering required.

"The contemplation, too, it ſeems, of a variety of objects novel to them ſo engroſſed their attention, that they were not aware of the temerity of their proceeding: nor did the boatmen remind them of it. Indeed, from what I can learn, I am apprehenſive theſe fellows were incapacitated for making the obſervation, through their having been too liberally treated.

"The ſurvey then, it ſeems, of a ſcene to which they were ſo unaccuſtomed, had ſo engroſſed their attention, that they did not notice their diſtance from land, till a breeze which had ſprung up off ſhore, increaſing to a briſk gale, reminded them of the difficulty they would have to beat up againſt it.

"This however, on diſcovering their ſituation, they endeavoured to do; but in vain. The wind continued to drive them before

it, in ſpite of their utmoſt efforts: and, to add to their apprehenſion, their proſpect landward began to be obſcured by low thick clouds, which, in the ſpace of half an hour, darkened all the ſky, and admitted them no light, but what proceeded from the flaſhes of lightning, which, every two or three minutes, burſt more and more vivid from the ſurrounding gloom; and which only ſerved to diſcover to them their unhappy ſituation in the moſt dreadful manner. For they could only diſcover the fury of the waves by the agitation of the veſſel, except when the lightning, as it were, ſet fire to the billows.

"In this condition all they could do was to endeavour to keep the boat ahead againſt the waves, to prevent her overſetting; though this was hardly what they hoped to do a minute to an end.

"The boatmen were now only rouſed from their heedleſſneſs to yield to deſpair. Their oars were become uſeleſs.—Oh!—to think

then

then what were thy ſenſations, my ſiſter, my dear devoted—But, my friend, thou ſhalt ſee I can be calm.

"The boat which they were in was an open one, having only a little ſlight cabin (which deſerved little better title than an awning) raiſed in the middle.

"You will gueſs that the danger they were in was endeavoured to be concealed from the ladies as long as poſſible: but deſpair knows no caution. They ſoon diſcovered their hopeleſs condition. Linny ſunk into the arms of her father, faintly pronouncing the name of my friend.—O Wanley! what a heart didſt thou poſſeſs, in poſſeſſing hers!

"She remained thus inſenſible, as my father gueſſes, about half an hour; my father little better himſelf, and totally unable to aſſiſt her.

"She however began at length to move, rouſed perhaps by the ſcreams of the other ladies, who, being unhappily ſenſible of their

their ſituation, indulged the moſt lamentable complaints.

" My poor father had no conſolation, however, to afford her when ſhe revived; for their fate appeared inevitable: wherefore, throwing her arms round his neck, ſhe exclaimed, ſobbing moſt piteouſly, 'Oh, I ſhall never ſee him more!—My Wanley! —no, never! My mamma, too—my brother —O papa—my papa, what will——.' Whether ſhe added any thing more or not, my father cannot ſay; for juſt then they felt the boat hurled, as it were, with a prodigious velocity, and in the ſame inſtant, with an undeſcribable concuſſion, ſhattered to pieces.

" What paſſed for ſome ſucceeding ſpace of time none of the company can give any account of; for their extreme horror, and the violence of the ſhock, totally deprived them of the uſe of their faculties.

" My father ſays, when he became ſenſible he found himſelf on ſomething firm, though the roaring of the waves ſtill ſeem-

ed

ed to threaten him with deſtruction. His daughter occurred to his memory. He looked around, but could diſtinguiſh nothing. He called—but no one anſwered. He called again. He thought amidſt the din of the ſtorm that he diſtinguiſhed a groan. It ſeemed near him.

"Juſt then a faint flaſh of lightning (for the hurricane now ſeemed abating) diſcovered to him three of his companions, almoſt cloſe by him, lying on the ſide of a rough and rather ſteep aſcent.

"One of them raiſed himſelf up. My father ſpoke. Mr. Oldſworth was now ſufficiently ſenſible to reply; and preſently after the voices of Mrs. Oldſworth and two of the boatmen anſwered to his interrogatories.

"But they had no time either for congratulations or condolences; for the waves, which had for a while receded, returned furiouſly over them; though not with ſuch impetuoſity, they think, as when their boat

was

was wrecked. But moſt probably the ſurge had ſpent its force ere it reached them, as it did them no other damage than renewing their terrors..

" They however took the advantage of the ebb to move farther up the aſcent, out of the reach of the billows.

" The ſtorm decreaſing, it was now light enough to diſcern the horrors of the ſcene. They were on a barren rock; which the waves, denouncing deſtruction, ſeemed to aſſail on every ſide.

" A part of their boat lay in a ſhelf of the rock, which prevented its being waſhed out to ſea, and which probably ſaved the lives of thoſe who ſurvived; but all the aft of the boat was entirely gone, the keel appearing to have been broken acroſs the ridge of that ſhelf wherein the remainder now lay.

" My father, not diſcovering whom undoubtedly he was moſt anxious to diſcover in the wretched groupe around him, pierced

ed the air with repeated cries, pronouncing the name of my dear loſt ſiſter; as did the reſt of the company thoſe of their loſt companions, fondly hoping that they, as well as themſelves, were on ſome part of the rock: but receiving no anſwer to their vociferations, my father was only reſtrained by force from going down into the waves; thinking that his child might be lying ſenſeleſs ſomewhere on the beach.

"The boatmen indeed ventured as far as they durſt; but could diſcover nothing either of her, or of the others that were miſſing.

"On this rock, and in this torturing ſtate of ſuſpenſe, they remained till morning, when, the ſea being calm, they found the rock to be of a much larger extent than it appeared before; the waters having now conſiderably retired from it. But to the ſouth-eaſt (as they judged by the riſing ſun) they only diſcovered land; which they rightly concluded to be the coaſt of France.

"Alarmed as they undoubtedly were (on their

their own account) to find themſelves inclоſed by the ſea, on ſuch a barren ſpot, their firſt care was however to trace the rock all round, in ſearch of their loſt companions.

"I mention this circumſtance that thou, my dear friend, mayſt not imagine that my ſiſter was ſuffered to periſh through a ſelfiſh inattention to another's misfortune.

"Their ſearch proving fruitleſs, my father, I am informed, laid himſelf down on the rock, and reſigned himſelf to deſpair. The others, who had not his additional cauſe for ſorrow, kept a ſharp look out, in the hope of diſcovering ſome veſſel which might relieve them from their preſent perilous ſituation. And the hope was not defeated, for in leſs than an hour ſeveral fiſhing ſmacks appeared, one of which coming nearer than the reſt, they hailed.

"It approached, and took them in, and carried them to D—— in France; whence

my

my father immediately diſpatched a boat to inform me whither they were driven, as alſo to prevent my anxiety, if they ſhould not yet return for ſome days: but our ſad misfortune he concealed from me, and conſequently withheld his real motive for remaining a while in France; which was (as I have ſince learned) to make enquiries along the coaſt; in the feeble hope that our dear Linny might ſomewhere there have been driven on ſhore. But, alas! my dear Penſon, the enquiry and the hope were alike in the concluſion forlorn.

"They returned here Sunday evening—I met my father in the court. There was no need of aſking queſtions. His look and the dejection of thoſe about him indicated the height of misfortune. However, with a preſaging heart I demanded my ſiſter. "O Tom!" was all the anſwer I then had. Penſon, I can no more. I have ſtrained my fortitude to a pitch, which I wonder it has ſo long ſuſtained. The affail-

ments

ments of ſorrow cannot ſtill be repelled; but in the midſt of calamity let us be men. I could indeed indulge a burſt of grief; I could agonize over the fate of a ſiſter, now immerſed in the ſuffocating brine, now floating on her watery bier: but I know the diſpoſition of my friend, and would rather wiſh to ſet him an example of riſing ſuperior, not to the ſenſe of ſorrow, but to the debility conſequent on the indulgence of it.

"Can ſuch an example, ſet thee by a brother, a fond brother, ſenſible of the worth of his loſt ſiſter, be wanting in its effect? Let it not, my Wanley! Let it rather ſtimulate thee ſo to moderate thy own grief, as to be able to ſupport my mother. Remember, 'tis the requeſt of thy Melinda's brother, that thou comfort her parent.

T. Bountly.

"P. S. My father muſt not be expected yet to return to G——. He is at preſent ill

ill of a fever, the conſequence of a chill occaſioned by his remaining ſo long in his wet clothes; and though I am not apprehenſive of danger, yet he will not be in a condition to travel very ſpeedily.—Thus much to account for ſubſtituting this diſconſolate letter in the ſtead of a perſonal appearance, yet more diſconſolate."

What anſwer Mr. Penſon ſent to this letter, or whether or not he returned any, I can't ſay: but I am inclined to think he returned none; at leaſt not for a conſiderable time after: for I have often heard him ſay he never could give vent to his feelings in words during the firſt onſet of diſtreſs: and I once remember to have heard him hint a doubt that thoſe who *could*, rather affected a ſorrow than ſuffered it.

A perſon, he would ſay, under any extreme bodily pain, was totally unable to deſcribe it: but when it was a little abated, he could enter on the deſcription very affectingly.

The mind muſt be in a certain degree compoſed, or, in other words, "heavy grief muſt have given way to milder melancholy," before the ideas can be fitted with language any way equal to them. Till that period arrive, ſenſibility can be expreſſed by geſticulation only.

On theſe grounds he uſed to conclude that thoſe writers who pretend to write in the very inſtant of their calamity, effectually diſcover what they labour to conceal: for, by exerting themſelves in ſuch ill-timed deſcriptions, they prove their woes to be only the conjurations of a wild fancy.—Permit me here to relieve my narrative with a few lines which occur to me on this ſubject.

From the ſad ſoul immur'd in grief's deep gloom,
No thought eſcapes to gather rhetoric flow'rs:
Nor yields its cumber'd habitation room
For art's trim feats, or fancy's ſportive pow'rs.

No

No!—Not the wretch outſtretch'd upon the rack
Suffers the flit idea leſs to roam,
When every ſtraiten'd life-ſtring holds it back,
And pain confines it to its own ſad home.

"But," continued Mrs. Barnes (ſeeing the lawyer look rather impatiently), "I ſhall tire you with my borrowed obſervations, wherefore I will reſume my ſtory.

In the evening of the ſame day, Mr. Penſon came again to our houſe.

My miſtreſs was ſtill ſitting in the ſame room, leaning her head on her hand, and weeping very plentifully.

Penſon drew a chair cloſe to her, and taking her diſengaged hand, looked in her face as though he was going to ſpeak: but, inſtead of ſpeaking, he only wept.

After a few moments he lifted her hand with an action as though he was again attempting to ſay ſomething: but again nothing found utterance but tears.

My miſtreſs, indeed, at intervals ſobbed out "My poor child!—my dear Linny!"—But Penſon's grief was quite mute.

After indulging this mournful interview for ſome conſiderable time, he aroſe, and, clapping one hand moſt emphatically to his heart (the tears ſtreaming yet faſter from his eyes), bowed to her with an air which I ſhall never forget. His tongue indeed was dumb; but his countenance ſeemed to ſay, "Ah, madam! you have loſt a child—I would ſooth *your* affliction. But I have loſt the counterpart of my ſoul, and for *myſelf* I deſpair."——He left the houſe.

Next day Mrs. Bountly ſeemed more compoſed. Penſon did not call all day; and my miſtreſs having enquired frequently after him, I went in the evening to ſee for him.

He was at home, and had ſcarcely been out of his room all day; yet complained not of any illneſs. His family were alarmed for

for the conſequences of the deep melancholy that had taken poſſeſſion of him. I went to him. He was ſtanding againſt the window with his arms folded, gazing with a vacant eye into the garden.

He turned on my entrance.—I ventured to expoſtulate with him on the unavailingneſs of ſorrow (for though, to be ſure, my own heart was almoſt broken, I was ſorry to ſee him ſo yield himſelf up to deſpair); but experiencing in myſelf the inadequacy of my expoſtulations, I adverted to the requeſt contained in his friend Mr. Bountly's letter; and endeavoured to ſecond its injunctions, by reminding him, that his affection for her who was loſt ſhould inſpire him to *endeavour*, at leaſt, to comfort thoſe who yet remained. "Her brother, Sir, your Melinda's brother, enjoins you: the diſtreſs of her aged parent demands"—He interrupted me.—"Betty," ſaid he, and the moiſture filled his eyes as he ſpoke, "I have wept with her: no other comfort have I

to beſtow: and again I will weep with her." He turned himſelf from me to hide his emotion. His manner affected me. I went to him, and took his hand: "Come then, Sir," cried I, "go with me, and we will weep all together."

But I will not trouble you with a repetition of every little incident that evidenced the poignance of his ſorrow. I will only ſay, that, by indulging, and at the ſame time endeavouring to conceal it, he probably increaſed its force.

He continued to come daily, and almoſt hourly, to our houſe; but his ſociality was quite gone. He was become penſive and ſilent, and would beſtow himſelf rather, when he viſited us, in an empty room, than in one that was frequented. There he would ſit by the hour, and gaze over all the furniture, as though he was conſidering of ſomething that was out of place.

At

At length his conſtitution viſibly yielded to the perturbation of his mind. He was pronounced out of hope, and every body gave him up for loſt. His fate was however ſuſpended. He recovered: but this illneſs gave the finiſhing ſtroke to his character; rendering him not only caſually, but conſtitutionally, melancholy.

At the commencement of this period, company of every kind ſeemed diſguſtful to him, inſomuch that it became the general talk, and he acquired the name of the Young Mope.

However, by ſlow degrees, he became a little, and but a little, more converſable; for mirth ever after was a ſtranger to his boſom.

* * * * *

Mrs. Barnes's narrative was here interrupted by a noiſe over head. We liſtened a moment. It ſeemed to increaſe. I

ſtept ſoftly, and without a light, up ſtairs to diſcover the cauſe.

I peeped from the landing-place. The ſtranger's chamber door was open; and the light of the moon diſcovered him ſtanding in his ſhirt on one ſide of the bed, whilſt—

* * * * * *

END OF SELBY'S HISTORY.

THE MELANCHOLY MAN.

PART III.

THE CURATE's CONNECTION;

OR,

THE GYPSEY GIRL.

READER, eſtimating the height of thy chagrin, at the abruptneſs with which Selby quits his narrative, by what I felt myſelf on the ſame occaſion, *I* (and I would have thee believe from an impulſe of good-nature) appear here, in his ſtead, to compromiſe the diſappointment, by anſwering, as far as I am able, to the demands of thy curioſity: for though the preceding proof of his abilities may not induce thee to lament the abſcondance of the hiſtorian, I flatter

flatter myſelf thou wouldſt not however be pleaſed with the failure of the hiſtory.

Not that I would, like great men when they come into office, beſpeak high expectations of myſelf, by inſinuating a diſparagement of my predeceſſor. No. Were I capable of the idea, the part I have to perform is too brief to make room for it. On the contrary rather, ſo much content as an indolent rector experiences on hearing that his pariſhioners are ſatisfied with the labours of an unlikely curate, ſo much ſhall I experience if Selby's endeavours to amuſe thee be ſo fortunate as to meet thy approbation.

But however thou mayſt now approve (and I hope thou art not ſo much diſguſted as to prevent thy proceeding); and however I myſelf may have approved his attempt, as forming an introduction neceſſary to the ſubſequent correſpondence (and that I did approve it in that light, the pre-

face

face has already ſaid, and its appearance evinced): yet, conſidering it as a part of the whole, I believe, when thou haſt peruſed this work, thou wilt have no reaſon to accuſe it of commencing with a flaſh, and ending in ſmoak—"*Fumum ex fulgore.*" And I own, in addition to what I have hinted at above, that I was induced to retain Selby's fragment, and that almoſt verbatim (notwithſtanding the unintereſtingneſs of ſome of its parts) principally to prevent ſuch an accuſation.

Whether what follows will procure from thee the compliment "*fulgorem ex fumo,*" I cannot determine. It will not, if thou be an *exciſeman.*

But glancing towards ſenſibility, my boſom ſmites me. Like a ſurgeon haranguing over a fracture, I tantalize when I ſhould relieve. Let my utmoſt addreſs in eaſing thy ſuſpenſe immediately atone for the inconſideracy.

I have

I have already obliquely hinted my chagrin at the abrupt breach in the ſhopkeeper's narrative.

"How inopportune!" ſaid I. Selby was preſent. "The deficiency," ſaid he, "may yet be ſupplied, were it worth the while."

"Is there a doubt then, ſaid I?"

"Why, perhaps not with me," anſwered he; "but there may with ſome."

"How ſo?"

"Becauſe the incident about to have been related would place the peculiar character of the penſive man in a point of view, that ſome would conſider as ridiculous, and others as unnatural."

"Indeed!"—

"Yes; for at firſt glance it ſtruck even me as ſuch, till the greatneſs of his ſentiments converted my riſibility into veneration."

"Nay then, not reckoning on a ſtroke of

of character, I muſt have it, if only for theſe ſentiments. Here—reſume the pen."

"No, Sir; the pen is in a better hand: have not I already diſclaimed it?"

"Come, then, recollect yourſelf, and I'll be your amanuenſis." And I inſtantly began to write, whilſt Selby related as follows:—

Betty's narrative, I have already ſaid, was interrupted by a noiſe over head. I have alſo related how we liſtened, and how I crept ſoftly up ſtairs to ſee what was the matter: that peeping from the landing-place, and the ſtranger's chamber-door being open, the light of the moon diſcovered him to me ſtanding in his ſhirt on one ſide of his bed; whilſt on the other, in her ſhift, ſtood Sal, our houſe-wench, buſied, as though new making it.

I was ſurpriſed. But the gentleman was ſpeaking in a low, eager voice. "Why, what do you mean, girl?—Think better of

yourſelf,

yourſelf, whatever you think of *me*." Whilſt the other kept muttering, "Do't in a minute. Do't in a minute.—Juſt ſpread it a little wider—a little wider—that's all." "Weak girl," anſwered the gentleman, "don't oblige me to expoſe you.—Retire and ——"

But not ſtaying to hear more, I ſtept down to inform my houſekeeper.

"Bleſs me," cried ſhe, on hearing my account; "an impudent thing! ſhe ſaid ſhe was not very well, and I permitted her to go to bed, ſoon after Mr. Penſon retired—what does the huſſy mean?" And ſo ſaying, ſhe caught up the candle, and haſtened up ſtairs, I after her, and Barclaim, who was highly tickled at the circumſtance (and who did not want face to introduce him any where), after me.

Sal was now at the foot of the bed, with a certain chamber utenſil in her hand, and Mr. Penſon endeavouring gently to put her out of the room; when Barclaim, getting

a glance of them from the top of the ſtairs, exclaimed jeeringly, "What ejectment!—*Baron contre femme!*—For the credit of your manhood, Sir, take her back again."

Mr. Penſon was in the utmoſt confuſion at the ſight of us; but, rather moved at the lawyer's ſarcaſm, he replied, "Manhood, Sir! Why look you, had I been a beaſt, I ſhould not have acted as I now do."

The lawyer was laughing out ſomething in reply; but Mrs. Barnes having got to Sal, and given her a hearty ſhake, the wench ſcreamed, darted from Mrs. Barnes, beat the candle out in her paſſage, and encountering Barclaim, who was juſt landing from the ſtairs, hit him down, fell over him, and both together rolled to the bottom.

The rumble of their deſcent, the cruſh of the utenſil which Sal had in her hand, intermixed with the wench's ſhrieks and the lawyer's oaths, drew my houſekeeper and me inſtantly to their aſſiſtance: but I

was

was ſoon relieved from all apprehenſions of any injury having occurred to the parties.

The laſt turn-over, indeed, had, I believe, for a moment, ſtunned the wench: but ſhe preſently found her tongue, and cried "Fire!"

"You lie, you vixen!" replied the lawyer, in a tone half peeviſh and half droll: "you lie, you vixen! 'tis Noah's flood."

"What's the matter, Sir?" ſaid I.

"Why," ſays he, "here's a brimſtone on fire, it ſeems: but were I only to ſhake my ears over her, I'm ſure 'twould quench her, though ſhe burnt like a ſquib."

"But I hope you are not hurt, Sir?"

"Hurt!—Yes, I am!—Killed like a kitten—knocked on the head firſt, and drowned afterwards."

And now Mr. D——, the Briſtolian (whom we had left in the parlour with Mr. Dobſon), alarmed at the noiſe, approached us with a candle; which no ſooner caught the wench's eyes, than ſhe darted up ſtairs

as

as faſt as ſhe had tumbled down, notwithſtanding the ſhards of the broken utenſil, and the trickle of its contents, which impeded her paſſage.

Mr. Penſon too, almoſt at the ſame inſtant, having ſlipped on a part of his clothes, appeared at the top of the ſtairs; which the lawyer obſerving, and thinking, perhaps, that he was coming to enjoy a jeſt at his expence, which he had no mind to afford him, called out—"You ſee, Mr. Prudence, though the wench could not make a beaſt of you, ſhe has of me—a kind of otter, d'ye ſee, plaſhing between land and water. However, out of four legs, 'tis hard if I can't find two, to bear me from a baiting—ſo good night t'ye."—— And away he ran, ſhaking his wet locks like a ſpaniel.

But he need not have feared Mr. Penſon's raillery, who approached with a countenance of the moſt humane ſolicitude, anxiouſly enquiring the conſequences of the

accident; and on being ſatisfied that no harm had accrued, addreſſing me with a moſt extenuating accent, begging pardon for being the cauſe of ſuch an untimely tumult, and requeſting that I would not let appearances injure him in my eſteem: adding, that, though he was ſorry there was a fault to be lodged *ſomewhere*, yet, as I was in part witneſs to the ſcene, a deſire to retain my good opinion incited him to exculpate *himſelf:* that, provided there had been no breach of hoſpitality in the caſe, yet he hoped he was always too much maſter of himſelf to demean the ſtation in which nature had placed him—that of a *man.* "The *bluſh*," continued he (and I now feel its glow on my cheek, at the recollection of what is paſt), I always conſider as the ſignal to my reaſon to mount guard, that it may not be ſurpriſed into any thing unbecoming its character."

I told him he need make no apology, for that I had ſeen more of the affair than he

he ſuppoſed. "But pray, Sir," ſaid I, "do you never bluſh but at the appearance of evil?"

"Why, yes, Sir," replied he: "the deſire after rectitude has produced (and undoubtedly does produce in others beſides me) an habitual conſciouſneſs of imperfection; perhaps too much ſo; the conſequence of which is, that, like the beſieged in a frail fortreſs, the diſcriminating powers are alarmed frequently when there is no real danger. But theſe faculties once rouſed, are themſelves to determine the exigence; and 'tis better to have the ſentinel too alert than too remiſs.—Had Heaven deſigned to man the ways of the brute, it had not implanted in him a ſenſe of ſhame."

"Why then I find you conſider the bluſh as one of the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of man," cried I.

"Yes," ſaid he; "'tis the red pendant of reaſon—'tis peculiar to man—'tis an evidence of an inherent ſenſe of right and wrong. It

waves only over the countenance of rationality, making a viſible diſtinction of its reſidence: wherefore, methinks, thoſe only who would reduce that diſtinction to the level of the beaſt, ſhould endeavour to extirpate the bluſh. But the truth is, Sir, that, like wayward children, who ſometimes would gladly reſign their Sunday's finery for the liberty of plaſhing in the dirt, there are too many among mankind who are weary of their dignity, and would fain exchange it for the unconſciouſneſs of the brute."

Here Betty, who had been up ſtairs after Sal, joined us. She informed us, that the wench was in a ſad taking, but that ſhe believed there had been no ill intention. "I'll tell you," continued ſhe, "how it was. This evening, after Mr. Penſon's arrival, I was ſo diſpleaſed with the bed ſhe had prepared for him, that I made her make it anew; nor was I ſatisfied then: when I would accommodate a friend, I am

particular.

particular. I was angry at her aukwardneſs. 'Twas what ſhe had been unuſed to; and it impreſſed her imagination ſo that ſhe aroſe, it ſeems, in her ſleep, to amend that which ſhe had not done well when awake."

"Poor thing!" replied Penſon; "how ſtupid that I could not diſcern her ſituation! But I was raſh"———

"No, Sir, no," interrupted I; "you were not raſh at all."

"Yes, but I was," replied he. "My reſentment was moved. The pride of virtue——But no—it muſt be from a conſciouſneſs of ſelf defect, that we ſo readily conſtrue every appearance into evil intention. Heavens! what has man to do to be angry with his fellow, incapable as he is of diſtinguiſhing the motives of his actions!"

"Bleſs me!" interrupted Mrs. Barnes, "now you'll diſtreſs yourſelf about nothing at all! Why your anger, my dear Sir, is

like placing a looking-glaſs behind a candle; it ſerves but to ſhew your goodneſs double."

And ſo ſaying ſhe retired; and preſently after I followed her example, leaving my gueſt to his repoſe.

Returning to the parlour, I found the Briſtolian commenting to Mrs. Barnes on ſome parts of Penſon's character: whilſt the parſon, who had fallen aſleep ſoon after his laſt altercation with the lawyer, was ſtill doſing in the great chair; and whom, as the night was pretty far advanced, I now thought it moſt prudent to awake.

He yawned. "Juſt what I expected," cried he; "the moſt inſipid tale, to be ſure, that ever"——"Sir," retorted Betty, "thoſe who exerciſed their diſcernment perhaps found it ſo: but the cenſure of one who cenſures habitually, deſerves no more to be regarded than what our Sal does when ſhe walks in her ſleep."

The parſon was hardly ſenſible enough

to

to make a reply; and, if he had, probably he would not have vouchſafed it. However, he was ſufficiently awake to find his legs, and grumble us a good night.

Here, declaring he could proceed no farther, coherently, without adjuſting his memory by Mrs. Barnes's, Selby's information ended; but not fully to my ſatisfaction: for I had noticed in the correſpondence which I ſhall preſently lay before the reader (and which the reader will recollect from the preface I was then poſſeſſed of), ſeveral circumſtances alluded to, which this information ſerved to throw no light on.

I therefore applied myſelf to Mrs. Barnes; and in one of thoſe ſnug evenings, when a comfortable fire thaws ceremony into ſociality, ſuch another evening as that when ſhe endeavoured to entertain the parſon and the lawyer, I got her to reſume her narrative; which ſhe did without much entreaty, continuing it to the fartheſt of her knowledge. From which continuation,

reader, I ſhall extract ſo much, to preſent thee, as will ſerve to prepare thee for the alluſions above hinted at.

But though what I ſhall preſent thee be but an extract, I could wiſh thou wouldſt forget *me* in the peruſal of it, and rather imagine Mrs. Barnes taking up her tale after the departure of the parſon, and continuing it to Selby and the Briſtolian in the parlour, while Penſon ſlept; which, it ſeems, was the caſe, though Selby could not methodize the recollection. In ſhort, for the ſake of connection, I would wiſh to fix thy imagination at the habitation of the ſhopkeeper, till it ſhall be convenient for the penſive man and thy imagination to depart thence together.

To this effect, then, we will ſuppoſe Mrs. Barnes proceeding.——

It has already been ſaid, that, from the death of Miſs Bountly, Penſon became habitually abſtracted and ſolitary.

His mind, naturally formed for reaſoning

ing and reflection, taking from that period a gloomy turn, he employed his faculties, ſo ſoon as he could be ſaid to employ them at all, principally in the endeavour to convince himſelf that the apathy he indulged was perfectly rational; and that the general purſuits of mankind were the effects of miſtaken calculations.

If any one endeavoured to perſuade him to puſh his fortune in the world, he would immediately aſk them how that fortune was to reward him for the pains of obtaining it. "Nature," would he ſay, "requires but little: I have already more than enough to ſatisfy it. Why then aim at a greater acquiſition? The man who has already ſufficient clothing to exclude the cold, yet loads himſelf with more, is a fool. He whoſe appetite is ſatisfied, yet continues to eat, is worſe than the beaſt."

In conſequence of theſe maxims, he viewed with a negligent eye every thing that, in the eſtimation of the world, is deſirable,

ſirable, even to the article of amuſement. "To what end," ſaid he, "ſhall I follow the tinkle of diſſipation? Can rationality be ſatisfied with that which experience avows to be unſubſtantial; or whoſe momentary bliſs expires in debauch?"

Thus he.——But nature inſtinctively endeavours to relieve itſelf when diſeaſed, though in peculiar caſes it may reject the uſual means. Thus it was with Penſon. The complexion of his mind was indeed unſuited to the aſſociation of his fellow men; yet, whilſt he thought he ſhunned amuſement, he involuntarily ſought it, though of a kind one would not have preſcribed to one in his predicament.

To roam the lonely field; to tread the unfrequented path; to contemplate the green ivy creeping up the withered oak, like hope endeavouring to diſprove a certainty; or the blighted leaf dropping like diſappointed expectation; to ruminate over the unimportant buſtle of an ant-hill; to

ſpread

ſpread himſelf on the graſs, and trace the little minims of nature, like the native Americans, exploring their unbounded foreſt; and to moralize if a thwart ſtraw impeded their intent progreſs; to pore over a brook, and, emulative of the univerſal Benefactor, feed the minnows with crumbs from his pocket: theſe unlikely means were what nature adapted to relieve his mind, by giving juſt ſuch a play to its functions as they found a pleaſure in indulging. Nor did the operation end here. Nature is ever conſiſtent in its deſign, though it be ſometimes imperfect in the execution. Man was made to enjoy the ſociety of man. Penſon, though he yet avoided, and never after found his mind ſufficiently light to play with either the roughneſs or artifice of the adult, began to experience a peculiar propenſity to enjoy the ſimplicities of children. Their affections explicit, and their manners direct and gentle, conſtituted them companions with

with whom he could aſſociate, without the neceſſity of rouſing his circumſpection, or exerting his faculties, beyond their inclination.

Propitious to their wiſhes, he would lead the little coquette to the cowſlip-field, and braid her temples with flowers; the little hero to the heath, and augment his ſtature with a ruſh cap; or, repairing to the ſolitary bird-keeper, help the little urchin to erect his hut; then ſit down with him, and partake the blaze of his fire, or play at quoits with him to exerciſe his benumbed limbs: which, together with his occaſional gratuities to them, rendered him the acknowledged friend of all the children in the pariſh.

But with all his oddities, he was yet reſpected. His way of thinking and acting was oppoſite to that commonly purſued; not from a want of thought, but from too much intenſeneſs: conſequently, however puerile, he was never mean.

At

At length, books, a ſuccedaneum ſtill of the abſtracted kind, preſented themſelves, and were accepted. He had formerly derived both knowledge and pleaſure from them; and he now congratulated himſelf, that, by their means, he could enjoy the benefit of ſociety without the impertinence of it; the converſation of the firſt of men, without being wounded by the 'ſkance looks of conſcious ſuperiority. But that he propoſed to himſelf any farther end in this renewal of his ſtudies, ſeems improbable: nevertheleſs, being naturally reflective, his mind, without an effort, retained and adjuſted what was adminiſtered to it without method, or any view beyond that of indulging the inclination of the moment. Whence the neighbourhood generally named young Penſon as an oracle of good ſenſe; and frequently appealed to his deciſion in abſtruſe points: whilſt it rated his conduct in common life, little better

than that of a fool.—" But ſomewhat too much of this."

Nearly three years had elapſed ſince the loſs of his Linny; when, in one of his ſolitary rambles, it ſeems, as he was going down a lane, he obſerved——But I find a letter of his among my collection, written at this period to his friend Bountly (for this friend, in hopes of drawing him out of his gloom, by giving employment to the powers either of his reaſon or his fancy, had found means, by occaſionally aſſuming the monitor, and repreſenting himſelf as one affectionately intereſted in his welfare, to engage him in a correſpondence explicit of all his concerns): ſo let him ſpeak for himſelf.

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

THY laſt, my dear Bountly, was it not rather ſevere on thy poor friend? But thy intention was kind; yea, and thy arguments good:—I allow them. Yet methinks I could advance equally cogent, and diametrically oppoſite. I would wiſh thee to purſue their drift. I ſhould be pleaſed to ſee thee high in wealth, fame, and honour: but I have no ambition for either, myſelf.

We talk of the ſtandard of reaſon: may we not as well talk of a ſtandard in nutriment?—What is proper to one conſtitution, cannot be aſſimilated with another. Excuſe me, my Bountly, if as yet my reaſon cannot juſt accord with thine. Perhaps it is ſhorter ſighted—perhaps it is longer—who ſhall decide between us? But bear with me ſtill—my Melinda's brother!—Be ſtill my friend!—If I profit not by thy admo-

admonition, conſider it as the effect of a weak ſtomach, which, from a certain idioſyncracy, involuntarily riſes againſt what thou in kindneſs wouldſt adminiſter. Yet, ceaſe not thy attention—continue to preſcribe: for, though I may occaſionally reject the preſcription, I will ſtill fulfil the promiſe I made thee, of ſubmitting even the movements of my ſoul to thy judgment. Thou ſhalt continue to know my caſe, however hopeleſs.

I have, and probably I may again, but I will not now enter into argument with thee, reſpecting what thou and all the world call prudence. No, I will now put my finger on my lip, and ſtand dumb before thee; for I cannot even influence my own judgment to acquit me reſpecting an affair I have juſt now engaged in. And how then can I expect thine? Yet think not I repent of it; or, if I do, it is the repentance of the head, and not of the heart. But thou ſhalt know it.

I was

I was yeſterday ſtrolling down the lane towards Blackthorn-bridge, when midway I eſpied a young woman, in mean apparel, ſitting on the farther ſide of the road, leaning her elbows on her knees, and her head on her hand, in a very diſconſolate poſture.

Sorrow, my Bountly, has been ſo long an inmate of my breaſt, that methinks all the family of diſtreſs are of my acquaintance.

I gazed at her as I approached. Poor thing! thought I; of what branch of the family art thou?

But the wind blew keen: it quickened my ſteps. I paſſed her. She regarded me not.

But the ſame air pinches her, thought I; yet does not ſhe flinch. Perhaps, having no reſource, ſhe ſubmits in deſpair to its inſult.

I ſtept back.

O Maker of man! thought I; poſſeſſed I but thy power of relieving diſtreſs, thy other

attributes would be by me unenvied! But let me not add neglect to inability. If I cannot relieve, I can however commiſerate.

She noticed my return, and lifted up her face, wet with the trickling tear.

She was young; her features were pleaſing, though her complexion was tarniſhed: but every lineament was touched with infelicity.

My boſom was moved. I pauſed before her. She caſt her eyes down. I was cloſe by her; and ſhe gently moved my cane.

I had ſet it on a worm.

Her ſenſibility quickened mine. I inſtantly threw myſelf on the bank beſide her.

"Daughter of diſtreſs," ſaid I, "let me ſhare thy griefs."

She eyed me, Bountly, ſuſpiciouſly. She checked her ſorrow—ſhe aroſe—I gueſſed her motive.

Thou doſt well, thought I. Man is inſidious; his very ſympathy is guileful: but his treachery is his puniſhment. He has thereby

thereby loſt what he nevertheleſs covets—the confidence of woman: having taught her hypocriſy for ſimplicity, and ſuſpicion for open-heartedneſs.

"Sir," ſaid ſhe, "*you* cannot relieve me."

Methought I felt a reproach in her accent; the reproach of my ſex. She would not truſt my appearance: ſhe would not accept me for a maiden's benefactor.

I was hurt, Bountly. The little gypſey (for ſhe appeared no other) would not credit my tenders.

I moved off.

But methought I could not leave her:—yet, to remain, evidently diſtreſſed her.

"No," ſaid I (and I threw her ſome ſilver); "not in his moſt wanton moments would Penſon *wittingly wound* a *worm*."

I left her; but I acquitted her for her ſuſpicion. Doubtleſs, thought I, the weeping one has reaſon for her apprehenſions.

I paſſed on to the bridge; but the little inſtance of the girl's humanity ſolely occupied my recollection.

Ah! thought I—why will ſhe not ſuffer me to be to *her*, what ſhe was to the *worm*—an inſtrument to lift the preſſure of adverſity from her, that ſo ſhe might crawl from under it?

The idea ſo wrought on me, that I inſtinctively returned.

She was again ſat down. The ſilver yet lay on the ground before her.

Drug! thought I, where is thy boaſted power?—Lo! thou canſt not eaſe the heart of a beggar!

But at my approach ſhe ſtooped and picked it up.

"No, Sir," ſaid ſhe, ſeeing me eye it—"I am not ungrateful; but I would fain be honeſt. You are good, but I am fearful. I would thank you heartily" (and ſhe fell on her knees)—"but let me not thank you diſhoneſtly."

"Never," ſaid I; and I raiſed her up: "never." And I could have kiſſed her ſmutty

ſmutty face, Bountly.—"Be honeſt ſtill, and Penſon will be thy *friend*."

At that word her tears began to flow afreſh.

"What is thy calamity, weeping one?"

"That I have *no* friend, *no* acquaintance, *no* one that regards me on the face of the whole earth."

Bountly, thou canſt not think how the idea of one ſo forlorn ſtruck me. I imagined myſelf in her ſtead. My heart ſunk within me at the imagination. Is ſhe not more miſerable than myſelf? thought I. I am degraded from my expectations, and I have loſt my love; but I have ſtill parents—I have ſtill a friend. The thought worked me beyond the bounds of prudence.

"And I will be *theſe* to *thee*, poor forlorn one!" ſaid I.—"But who art thou?"

"I can ſcarcely tell you," ſaid ſhe. "I was bred among vagabonds, and even they have caſt me off. I have been uſed hardly of a long time.—Often have I been told, I had no heart, and that I ſhould come to

nothing;—and indeed I think 'twas truly ſaid. But ſtill I had ſome one to *ſpeak* to, and now I have none."

"How long have you been ſo abandoned?"—"Sir," ſaid ſhe, "you are good: I'll tell you all.

"As far back as I can mind, myſelf, my old mother, and her huſband (for ſhe told me long ago he was not my father) rambled with a large company of thoſe people whom you call gypſies.

"My childhood was pleaſant enough, as it was ſubject to very little confinement: but, as I grew bigger, the contempt with which we were treated by the reſt of the world uſed to vex me ſadly; and I began to wiſh I had been any thing but a gypſey.

"My old mother had taught me to read in my childhood, for the ſake of learning ballads, to ſing at wakes and fairs. From theſe ballads I got notions which urged me to look into other books, ſuch as I could procure with a few halfpence, which were

now

now and then given me: and this ſerved to render my life yet more diſagreeable; for I was uſed to be told my notions did not ſuit with my deſtiny. I began to think ſo too; and, ſeeing it was impoſſible I ſhould be any thing but a gypſey, endeavoured to reconcile myſelf to my fate.

"It was ſome years ago that the gang to which we belonged diſperſed, owing to ſome private diſagreement.

"Myſelf and the old man and woman now only rambled together. He was a brute of a fellow. He frequently uſed me ill: but he uſed my mother worſe. 'Tis two years ſince ſhe ſuddenly left him. I could have wiſhed to have left him too. But where could I go? My mother was already gone I knew not whither. Beſides, the old man, after ſhe was gone, was rather kinder to me; for he could not well do without ſome aſſiſtance, as he was faſt advancing in old age.

"Three days ago we were at Endley Heath.

The old man had been abſent all the morning: however, about noon he returned, and taking a piece of bacon from his wallet, bade me dreſs it for dinner. I kindled a fire, and ſet on our kettle. While I was tending it, he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket, and gave it me; ſaying 'twas one he had found, and that he had ſomething more for me by and by.

"I was pleaſed to ſee him in ſo good a humour, and was making my beſt ſpeed in my cookery, when he aroſe, and, bidding me wait a bit, ſtept haſtily into an adjoining wood.

"We were at the foot of a hill, which my back was towards, ſo that I did not ſee ſome men who were coming down it: but he had ſpied them. All of a ſudden they came on me; ſome running on after the old man; but he was not to be found: whilſt I was ſeized, and the handkerchief he had given me taken from me.

"It ſeems the old man, being driven to his

ſhifts, had that morning waylaid a ſervant girl, and taken her bundle from her; that ſhe had followed him at a diſtance to Endley, and had there raiſed the neighbourhood. But he eſcaped, and I was left to ſuffer.

"I was hauled away to a town ſome miles diſtant, and examined before a juſtice. To be ſure the crime could not be proved againſt me; yet I was ordered to be flogged out of the pariſh as a vagabond. But juſt as I was led out of the juſtice's court-yard, a young gentleman came up, and gave the beadle ſome money, ſaying he would ſee me out of the pariſh himſelf; for that, as I was young, and not guilty, 'twas pity I ſhould be whipt.

"He took me a bye way, and talked ſo civil to me, that I thought him an angel, and that he was doing good for good's ſake.

"Having brought me into a bye lane, he ſtopt, and ſaid, 'There, young woman; you are now ſafe: and pray how do you mean to reward me for my kindneſs?'

"Alas,

"Alas, Sir," ſaid I, "I have nothing to give you but my thanks; and they, I'm ſure, you ſhall have a thouſand times."

'Ay, but that is not what I want,' ſaid he; and he began to be very rude with me. Whatever elſe I had endured, Sir, I had hither to been honeſt.

"I ſtruggled all I could; but he was too mighty for me. I called for help, but it was in vain; and he muſt have gained his purpoſe, but, juſt as my ſtrength began to fail, a horſe, whether frightened or what, I know not, galloped furiouſly along, and (the lane being narrow, and we fallen acroſs it) trod on the villain's leg.

"What was his hurt I cannot tell, for I made what haſte I could from him, and wandered on I knew not whither; ſuſpecting every body, and every body methinks ſuſpecting me. 'Tis hard—very hard, Sir, to have no one to ſpeak to in all the wide world."

"Poor thing!" ſaid I; "thou ſhalt have

have a friend. But could the old man be found, ſhouldſt thou like to aſſociate with him again? Shall I enable thee to ſeek him?"

Bountly, there was ſomething of duplicity in the queſtion, however natural: but my heart diſmiſſed the ſuſpicion, with the accent of it.

"Ah, no!" ſaid ſhe—"there it is. I am tired of the life of a vagabond, yet am fit for no other. O that I had been any thing but what I am!"

"Wait till I return," ſaid I: "I'll be back in ten minutes."

And truly, Bountly, I ſhould in leſs, if my pace could have equalled my wiſh. Judgment had given place to ſenſibility. In the firſt ſtarts of my humanity, I had formed a project, which I went as ſuddenly to execute: but thou knoweſt Woodley was too far diſtant for a ten minutes walk.

Thither I went—to Rachel Archer's. I had done her a kindneſs. She ever retained the

the remembrance of it. "Rachel," ſaid I, "yonder have I picked up a poor young gypſey: ſhe is abandoned by all the world: will you receive her?—I'll recompenſe the inconvenience; and, having ſatisfied *you*, be ſtill your debtor.—Do, Rachel," repeated I; for prudence began to peep from Rachel's eyes—"do, Rachel. Were you to ſee her ſorrows, you would pity her." Rachel could not deny me: and I returned to my weeping one.

I found her; but ſhe refuſed to quit the road with me. I urged her—ſhe fell on her knees.

"O Sir!" ſaid ſhe, "conſider my ſituation: with a will to be honeſt, yet ſcarcely knowing the means to remain ſo. You look like an angel; but I've already been deceived."

"Ah, maiden," returned I, "thou knoweſt not Penſon!—'Twas inadvertently that he wounded the worm. Eraſe the impreſſion from thy heart, weeping one: he will not wound thee."

I know

I know not, Bountly, with what countenance I pronounced theſe words: but the girl eyed me curiouſly; then ſeizing my hand in a kind of rapture, cried—"Surely *you* are good—*you* muſt be good."—And I led her away to Woodley.

Rachel took me aſide. How prudent the world is, Bountly! deliberating on a good act, leſt evil ſhould come of it; and often perſuading itſelf into an evil one, that good may enſue. "Why, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "why—why—ſhe'll make a fine girl; and—but that I know"——"Rachel," interrupted I, "give me credit that I do good from a good motive."

"Ay—but the world, Sir."

"Well—becauſe that may ſpeak ill, ſhall I ceaſe to do well?"

Rachel was anſwered.

Art thou too anſwered, my Bountly? for I know thou wilt ſtart the ſame objection.

I own the imprudence of the ſtep I have taken; a ſtep that requires perhaps a juſtification,

fication, and *that* implies a fault. How?—Not always. It implies however the appearance of one. But I have ſaid I would lay my finger on my lips; otherwiſe I would aſſure thee, I was actuated by the pureſt motive, and then aſk thee wherein, abſtracted from the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of ſelfiſh man, the proceeding was imprudent.

Myſelf it can never affect injuriouſly; except the expenditure of a few ſhillings, which I could not otherwiſe enjoy, be an injury.

The only diſagreeable thing which, reſulting therefrom, appears probable to my apprehenſion, is the diſpleaſure of my father, ſhould he get to the knowledge of it: for, however he may love his ſon, and indulge him in what he calls his eccentricities, he is yet, and thou knoweſt it, a man of *prudence*. But, if poſſible, it ſhall be concealed from him. Yet is not ſecreſy a mark of an imprudent meaſure? It may in ſome inſtances; but in this, methinks, I would adopt

adopt it to reconcile two of the nobleſt (though accidentally claſhing) principles. For I would fain indulge my philanthropy, and at the ſame time enjoy my father's countenance. His anger would embitter all my ſweets.

To produce a *good*, may not a little deceit be excuſable?—I don't like the thought. I muſt examine it farther.

Good bye.

W. WANLEY PENSON.

On the ſame ſubject, but of a date conſierably poſterior to the foregoing, we have the following.

THOU art quite wrong, Bountly. My affection for Carey, my little gypſey, is of a complexion totally different from what thou fancieſt.

I love her; I own I delight in her:—is ſhe not the child of my bounty?—Yea, I

own, on occaſion, I have been ſometimes tempted to ſalute her: but with juſt ſuch a ſenſation as when, after a long abſence, I have embraced my mother.

And ſo much affection ſhe deſerves: for ſhe is every thing I could wiſh her, and more than ever I could expect.

Whilſt at Woodley, where ſhe paſſed for a relation of Rachel's, I taught her, and had her taught, every thing abſolutely requiſite for one of her ſex; perhaps more ſo: and her endeavours, her ſucceſs, and her gratitude, kept pace with each other. Thou wouldſt be ſurpriſed at her proficiency.

Nature, Bountly, forms the minds of men, methinks, on certain *bevils*, which, in their progreſs through life, gives to each a particular bias. My fancy juſt now repreſents them like thoſe conical bowls, wherewith I have ſeen children piay at nine pins; and which, thrown in whatever direction, will naturally (if not prevented by the roughneſs of the pavement) gyre off into a ſpi-

ral

ral courſe, proportioned to the angle of their *bevil.*

The bevil of my little foundling was not that of a gypſey. Rugged contingencies only kept her in the courſe of one: no wonder, therefore, ſhe runs ſo ſmoothly and ſo rapidly now, in a circle to which her inclination inſtinctively biaſſed her.

But didſt thou know all, my Bountly, perhaps thou wouldſt conclude thy ſurmiſes to be certainties.

I have made thee the *cenſor* of my heart. Thou *ſhalt* know all.

Indeed I have ſo much inured myſelf to tell thee, not only what I do, but alſo what I think, that it would require an exertion of mind *now* to keep any thing from thy knowledge. Ah, Bountly! thou art my only friend—the only confidant of my boſom. I had once another. Thou wilt but love me the *better*, if I ſay I had once a *dearer*. —But ſhe is gone; and Penſon's breaſt has ever ſince been like a ſhip unmanned, and

driving before the tempeſt; and which ere now muſt have quite overſet, but that thy goodneſs from time to time threw a little ſtrength on board, to enable it to weather the ſtorm.

Forgive me, Bountly! I always loſe myſelf, if I touch on this ſubject. I ſaid I would tell thee all—I will; but indeed thou art wrong in ſuppoſing my love for Carey in the leaſt reſembles that wherewith I loved my Linny. Ah no! that never can be.

I am pleaſed with the recollection of what I have done for Carey; I am pleaſed with her gratitude; I am pleaſed that ſhe ſeems intereſted in every thing that concerns *me*—that I have gained an acquaintance in her, from whom I can expect compaſſion inſtead of cenſure for my weakneſſes: and——Bountly, I had once a ſiſter. I ſcarcely knew her—nor, till I loſt *thy* ſiſter, I hardly regretted the loſs of my *own*:—but ſince then, all hopes of an affinity more tender

tender being withered within me, how often have I ſighed—Oh that I had a ſiſter!

I ſaid, juſt now, every mind has a certain bias.

Mine, if I am any judge of myſelf, was calculated for the tendereſt of all ſocial connections: but, being *there* moſt cruelly thrown off, is it wonderful it ſhould *ſo* incline to the next—*a ſiſter?*

But whither am I rambling? I intended only to tell thee that I had found means to introduce Carey to my mother, as Rachel's kinſwoman.

My mother was much taken with her at the firſt interview; a ſecond rendered her yet more agreeable. Carey is artleſsly engaging. And now nothing would ſatisfy but the having her beneath the ſame roof, in quality of a perſon to look after her linen.

Thou mayſt think, Bountly, I did not oppoſe this. My boſom was conſcious of no unfitneſs: why then ſhould I have oppoſed it?

Carey then is with us (an odd name that—but at my requeſt ſhe writes *Caritas*; 'tis expreſſive, and not an unapt derivator).

Yes, Bountly! ſhe is with us. Were ſhe my ſiſter, I think I could not love her better; and yet methinks I could be happier in ſuch an affinity:—yet, as ſhe is not my ſiſter, I feel nothing in my heart like a wiſh that ſhe ſhould be any thing more. And of her being my ſiſter, two reaſons remove all hopes:—My ſiſter, it ſeems, though ſhe had dark eyes, was fair; Carey is brown. My ſiſter had a ſtain on her left arm, but Carey has none.—Yet, introduced by the idea of my ſiſter's ſituation, perhaps Carey found the nearer way to my affection.

For I think thus, Bountly: My ſiſter (diſguſted with her unfortunate lot) may, like poor Carey, on ſome diſconſolate bank, ſometimes perhaps ſit bedimming the eye of hope with the tear of deſpair.—Oh then! ſhould ſome one, like myſelf, following the dictates of the heart rather than the head,

lift

lift up her countenance, wipe away her obloquy, and become a brother to her—be a brother to the loſt Iſabel—oh Bountly! the thought warms me. Under that idea, I would be doubly a brother to my foundling. Heaven has reſtored me my ſiſter, methinks, by a ſubſtitute. Canſt thou blame me then, Bountly?

Thou didſt blame me: but I told thee I could not find in my heart to repent; nor wilt thou henceforth wiſh me.

My heart is open before thee; read it. Believe its characters: and for once acquit it for taking the lead of my judgment.

W. WANLEY PENSON.

After the date of the above, Carey, it ſeems, lived in Mr. Penſon's family about three years, during which period his mother died; Carey, after her death, taking on her the ſuperintendance of the houſe.

She was a perſon of a ſerious deportment, rather inclined to the penſive; and

of a tender diſpoſition, which exactly ſuited her to Mr. Penſon's temper of mind, to whom ſhe was ever ſtudiouſly attentive; humouring him in all thoſe ſtarts of ſenſibility, which his father termed his eccentricities; and ſympathiſing with him in all his ſorrows, whether real or imaginary: for his mind ſtill continued hazy (if I may be allowed the expreſſion); though time, and Carey's aſſiduities, had in a conſiderable degree diſperſed thoſe heavy clouds which had once lowred over it.

The alteration was obſervable; and the neighbours took it into their heads that he had a greater regard for her than his pride would ſuffer him to acknowledge.

But this was only imagination. Penſon truſted them not with the ſecrets of his heart. We ſhall therefore rather credit his aſſertions on this ſubject, as already delivered in the preceding letter. And there is the greater reaſon to credit them, in that his father (who certainly would not have winked

winked at a ſtep ſo imprudent in his ſon) uſed only to ſmile when hints to the contrary were ſuggeſted to him; and ſay—"I can truſt Bill's diſcretion: if he has whims, they are not the whims of a fool."

Undoubtedly Penſon had unboſomed himſelf to his parent on this point, as he ſomewhere obſerves he ſhould be loath to indulge even his philanthropy at the expence of a parent's peace.

The third year of their intimacy was already expired, when one evening Mr. Penſon (the old gentleman) was ſent for to a houſe at the farther end of the town, where the lower order of travellers, for twopence, procure for the night the accommodation of a pair of tattered blankets, ſpread on a bed of ſtraw.

He wondered at the ſummons; but it being delivered in preſſing terms, he immediately went; leaving his ſon, who was juſt come in from viſiting the aged parent of his Melinda (Mrs. Bountly), and from whoſe

houſe he ever returned peculiarly penſive, to conſole himſelf with the ſympathy of the gentle Carey.

When he arrived, he was introduced into a wretched apartment, where on a bed yet more wretched, and ſurrounded by a groupe of the family of indigence, lay an old woman evidently at the laſt extremity.

On his approach, ſome one ſtooped, and told the dying woman the gentleman was come. She immediately turned her head, and fixed her eyes on him, imploring his pardon in the moſt urgent terms.

He heard her with ſurpriſe, and haſtily demanded for what he ſhould pardon her.

"O Sir," ſaid ſhe, "they tell me you are the gentleman who loſt a daughter about eighteen years ago.—I ſtole her, Sir; and heaven *here* demands my life, where its greateſt crime was committed.

"If you recollect, Sir, a vagrant would once have told you your fortune (you were then fondling that child); but you upbraided

braided her with impoſture, and threatened to have her puniſhed. I was that impoſtor. Some hours after, ſeeing the ſame child tadling in and out your back gate, I decoyed it off—principally from a motive of reſentment; but in part, alas! from a view (too common to our profeſſion) of extorting charity by means of an infant's cry. But I could not die in peace till I had confeſſed my crime: nor can I hope for mercy hereafter, if I do not firſt find it here from you."

This account, in conſequence of her extreme weakneſs, was delivered in disjointed ſentences, which rendered it tedious: but, had it been more ſo, the old gentleman had not interrupted her; for ſo many paſſions were at once quickened in his breaſt, that, to have obeyed the impulſe of all, he muſt have had as many tongues; the one he had, like a machine acted on by contrary powers, being immovable.

At length the old woman having ceaſed

to ſpeak, inſtead of anſwering her prayer, he found utterance only to demand where his daughter *then* was.

In reply, ſhe gave him to underſtand that ſhe knew not; for that, having run away from her huſband ſeveral years before, ſhe had left *her* with *him*.

He now haſtily demanded where it would be moſt likely to find them. She could not tell; and faintly adviſed him to advertiſe for Iclebald, and Carey Mahud, with a reward.

He ſtarted at the ſound of Carey Mahud; but ſoon recovering his preſence of mind, diſpatched a meſſenger for his ſon, requeſting he would attend him forthwith, and bring his houſekeeper with him.

Wanley Penſon was repeating to Carey the occurrences of his youth; a ſubject he was ever deviating into, when in the company of thoſe before whom he could throw off his reſerve. And ſhe was lengthening out his broken periods with a ſigh,

when

when they were interrupted by the meſſenger; who, having briefly delivered his orders, returned.

Carey was ſtartled. She imagined her ſtep-father had diſcovered her: but Wanley ſoon calmed her apprehenſions, and they obeyed the command.

He led her to the houſe, handed her up the tottering ſtairs (for he was never wanting in attention to thoſe he regarded, though their ſtations were never ſo inferior), and introduced her to the dreary apartment. But no ſooner had Carey's eye and the dying mendicant's met, than both gave a ſcream, and Carey was inſtantly at the ſide of the bed.

The ſurpriſe was too great for the ſick—ſhe fainted. Carey endeavoured to recover her; and old Mr. Penſon was equally anxious for the return of her ſenſes. For though he was now convinced the old woman and Carey were known to each other, yet he ſtill wanted ſomething to ſatisfy him that the latter was his daughter.

The old woman revived.—He put his ſon and Carey from her; and ſtooping down to her, told her, in a low voice, he had ſtill doubts. Carey had not his daughter's complexion: beſides, where was the ſtain on her arm?

"Ah, Sir!" ſaid the dying woman, "our fraternity has arts for all ſuch purpoſes. But do you remember a glaſs tobacco ſtopper, with a queen Ann's ſixpence incloſed in the bulb of the glaſs?"

"I do," ſaid he; "I had it blown in Briſtol:—where is it?"

"Here," ſaid ſhe, taking it from an old pouch which lay by her; "I found it in the child's pocket."

The old gentleman's ſcruples now removed, he ſuffered nature to take its courſe, which inſtantly impelled him to the farther end of the room, where his ſon was ſoothing the emotions of Carey. He caught her in his arms; and having, to the ſurpriſe of his ſon, indulged in a paternal embrace, he turned

turned to Wanley; and ſaid, whilſt the tear moiſtened his eye—"The firſt was *my* due, Bill; the ſecond is thine." And putting Carey's hand in his, continued with emphaſis—"Thy ſiſter, Bill—thy ſiſter!"

The word operated on the ſon like a ſpark of fire on gunpowder. His feelings were already prepared for ſuch a recognizance, and he waited not the deliberate leave of his judgment to preſs her to his boſom.

Not ſo Carey. She ſtarted from his embrace, and fainted on the floor.

The ſcene likewiſe had been too powerful for the old mendicant. Nature had been exerted to the utmoſt, to ſupport it hitherto. She had hardly received the pardon ſhe requeſted of Mr. Penſon, when ſhe again fainted, never to revive.

Farther attendance being now unneceſſary in this receptacle of wretchedneſs, the father and ſon led Carey, who was a little recovered, from the preſence of death to their

their own habitation, now made to them the habitation of happineſs, by their having acquired thereto a daughter—a ſiſter.

But Carey, it ſeems, was unable to partake of their rapture. Her indiſpoſition obliged her to retire almoſt immediately to her chamber; and poor Wanley, whoſe dilated heart had already completely tenanted its new relation, was deſtined again to endure diſappointment: for the ſame breath which the next morning reported that Mr. Penſon had found his long-loſt daughter, again proclaimed her *loſt*.

She was nowhere to be found. Meſſengers were diſpatched to every quarter; but their ſearch was ineffectual. Her dereliction was a myſtery not to be unravelled.

It may eaſily be imagined that the father could not but lament the ſecond loſs of a daughter, whoſe uncertain fate had already coſt him many years anxiety; and whom experience had latterly proved to be worthy

his

his regard. As to Wanley, he again relapſed into his former gloom. A ſlight ſcratch will open an old wound. The loſs of his new-found ſiſter, his ſympathetic Carey, revived in his breaſt, with a good deal of its original pungency, the idea of the loſs of his Linny: and his now unoccupied affections echoed only the ſounds of what they once poſſeſſed.

But it is not often that Providence adminiſters a potion peculiarly trying, but it alſo adminiſters a cordial to enable the patient to ſupport it, or a lenitive to temper its effects. Whether or not it be that the inveteracy of our caſe requires ſuch a violent remedy, I ſhall leave to be inveſtigated on a more ſuitable occaſion; but certain it is, that we are perpetually plunged in diſappointments, from which we are raiſed at intervals juſt to reſpire, look round, wiſh, and be plunged again.

Perhaps Heaven conſiders our depravity as a kind of hydrophobia, which

is only to be cured by repeated immerſions, and thoſe almoſt to ſuffocation.

But this is tracing the thought farther than I intended, and indeed farther than is neceſſary to my preſent purpoſe, which would have been better anſwered had I only obſerved, that the hand of Providence, like that of a ſurgeon, though it directs the lancet, likewiſe prepares the plaſter (I will not ſay, *applies* it; for man may be ſometimes too froward to permit that). Thus it dealt with Penſon; to decoy whom from the verge of deſpair, Miſs Brudenell (whom we have mentioned before as the acquaintance of Miſs Bountly, and who for ſome years had moſtly reſided with an aunt at Haverfordweſt), unwitting of the intent, as we have conſtrued it, returned to G——, on the death of her mother-in-law, to ſuperintend the reſidence of her father, who had formerly been a phyſician of ſome note, but who had left off practice in conſequence of the devolution of a conſiderable

ſiderable fortune on him from a diſtant relation.

Her being once the friend of his Linny, was ſufficient to introduce her to his regard. And to thoſe for whom he entertained that ſentiment, his manners were, notwithſtanding his peculiarities, naturally engaging: for his ſenſibility incited him to a complaiſance, an attention that was inſinuating, and which continued to gain on the affections, whilſt he diſregarded perhaps the formal rules of politeneſs.

But whether it were this, or whatever it were that recommended him to the notice of the young lady, certain it is an intimacy commenced between them.

Mr. Penſon, the father, ever on good terms with Mr. Brudenell, had broken down his garden wall, which only parted his territories from thoſe of Mr. Brudenell, in order to open a paſſage for the latter into a pleaſant field, which terminated Mr. Penſon's orchard.

This facilitated the acquaintance of the young folks (if perſons paſt the madneſs of youth may be termed young); and it was reported that Penſon's diffidence only prevented him from acquiring both the hand and fortune of the lady; it being generally concluded, from her deportment, that her heart had betrayed itſelf to him without the formality of a ſummons. But whether or not this report was founded on truth, the future can only unravel.

This much, reader, I could wiſh, for a reaſon before given, thou would'ſt imagine delivered by Mrs. Barnes; for had I concluded the above, as the editor, the period had rather run thus:

Whether or not this report was founded on truth, the reader will learn from the correſpondence, which makes up the remainder of theſe volumes; and which I have ſelected for his entertainment, from a conſi-

derable refuſe, becauſe it takes up the Hiſtory of the Melancholy Man at a critical juncture (viz. his departure from the ſhopkeeper's), and carries it on thenceforth uninterruptedly: though to render it more completely ſo, I own I have not only ſuppreſſed many letters, but eked out many occurrences in others, which had elſe been obſcure.

And now, reader, conſidering myſelf only as a direction poſt in a place of uncertainty, I ſhall refer thee forward, after having briefly adviſed thee of three things: Firſt, that a conſiderable time had elapſed between the dates of the letters already preſented to thee, and thoſe which now ſucceed. Secondly, That Penſon's father had been dead ſome months previous to his appearance at the ſhopkeeper's. Laſtly, (and which indeed I wiſhed laſtly to inform thee of, the better to connect our hiſtory; though thou mayſt think it perhaps of little import), That Mr. D. the Briſtolian, who

ſupported a part, though but a ſmall one; in the evening's converſation at Selby's, was ſomehow ſo taken with the demeanour of his fellow gueſt, the gentle-mannered Penſon, that after breakfaſt he ſent his horſe forward, in order to enjoy the pleaſure of his company in a walk to Bath: from whence, after a ſhort ſtay, they proceeded together to Briſtol; whither, reader, 'tis now at thy option to follow them through the ſucceeding ſheets, or leave their track unexplored.

THE

THE MELANCHOLY MAN.

PART IV.

PENSON's CORRESPONDENCE.

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

Briſtol.

I HAVE ſo addicted myſelf to writing, that, when alone, I am ſeldom without a pen in my hand: and I have been ſo uſed to open myſelf to thee, that I frequently addreſs thee without conſidering what it is I do.

People who are cloſe to the world in general, are, I think, more explicit, if they

chance to find a friend in whom they can confide, than others who appear to be of a leſs reſerved diſpoſition. Haſt thou not obſerved ſomething like this, Bountly?

Little talkers are great thinkers. I know *that* by experience: but the labouring mind muſt repoſe itſelf ſomewhere; and where the tongue is ſlow, it frequently happens that the pen is ready. I could now, if I were writing to one whom I wanted to convince of the extent of my reading, evidence what I have advanced by many inſtances: but to my Bountly ſhall I aſſume the garb of oſtentation? No.—I will only inſtance myſelf, to whom ſolitude is the beſt ſociety; becauſe there my mind (which in company is often oppreſſed; which, wiſhing to divulge itſelf, labours for expreſſion; or which, *too* attentive to the geſtures of thoſe about me, forgets itſelf, loſing not only the fulneſs of its idea, but often the drift of its intention; yet there) at eaſe, and heedleſs of external

external objects, readily flows to my pen; ſo that I, pouring my boſom on the paper, can diſplay to thee, without bluſhing for their inaptitude, every circumſtance, however trifling, that occurs to me, and every whim that plays on my imagination; and derive therefrom all that relief which an unſuited diſpoſition hinders my deriving from converſation. But this I have told thee ſo often already, that, were it not the only apology I can make for thus perpetually obtruding on thy patience, I ſhould blame myſelf for repeating it.

I am now at Briſtol. I told thee in my laſt it would be neceſſary for me to come hither, in order to ſettle ſome affairs relative to my late father's buſineſs.

Buſineſs!——Thou blameſt me for quitting it, Bountly; repreſenting the unſeemlineſs of my becoming a lounger in ſociety, who am ſo well calculated to contribute to its welfare.

But how, my Bountly?

I acknowledge an idleton is an unſeemly character; but doſt think, with the ideas I have imbibed, I could at all have been beneficial to ſociety as a tradeſman?—I feel I could not. The principles of trade are oppoſite to the conſtitution of my mind.—The *principles*, did I ſay? I believe the expreſſion may be inaccurate. Give me leave then to ſay the *practice*.

Were I to buy, example teaches me to take all the advantage I can of the neceſſitated; and not to regard the reluctant conceſſions, made perhaps with a tearful eye, of him, who, probably to ſave a beloved wife or little ones from immediate diſtreſs, transfers his commodities to me on terms which he ſhudders in acceding to.

Bountly, I could not do it. My feelings, or, if thou wilt have it ſo, my weakneſs, could not ſupport ſuch an undertaking.

Beſides, how muſt it hurt a man of the leaſt delicacy to have his veracity called in queſtion

queſtion a thouſand times, perhaps, while endeavouring to diſpoſe of an article at the moſt moderate profit! Indeed, on the ſubject of gain mankind are become ſo ſuſpicious, that it equally avails to ſpeak or be ſilent; for the moſt ſolemn aſſeverations meet with but little credit. Nor is this the worſt: their feelings for each other are ſo callous, that, unleſs they think you injure yourſelf by ſelling, they will hardly be induced to buy. In ſhort, you muſt perſuade them that you become a loſer when they commence purchaſers, or they will leave you to languiſh over an unaccepted commodity. I am ſpeaking of the deportment of the ſons of commerce towards one another; and if I ſpeak of it truly, what liberal ſpirit would communicate with them! What!—to gain the approbation of theſe narrow ſouls, I muſt really do myſelf an injury, muſt I?—Yes, truly; or otherwiſe uſe all the rhetoric I am maſter of to perſuade them of a falſehood.

hood. No. I will do neither the one nor the other. My fortune is not large, but it is ſufficient for me: and for whom ſhould I amaſs wealth? I am alone in the world. My ſpirits were early broken, and probably have never attained their due tone: elſe perhaps the ways of mankind might not appear ſo very unworthy to me. I believe it muſt be ſo; for to thee they appear in a different point of view; and I have reaſon to believe my Bountly to be as honeſt as I would wiſh to be myſelf; yet reſpecting myſelf I cannot think otherwiſe than I do. 'Tis in vain, therefore, that to me thou urgeſt the plea of cuſtom in extenuation of the peccabilities of trade. Cuſtom cannot render wrong right, or right wrong; and till it can invert the thing, or my conception of it, I cannot allow its weight.

Excuſe me, Bountly, but I feel I am by no means calculated for buſineſs. Nay, truly, I know not what I am calculated for.

It

It is the greateſt misfortune to a man to have ideas inculcated in his youth, which ſuit not the ſtation of his riper years. If too refined, he muſt be unhappy; if too rude, he will be laughed at: and though I cannot determine for my own particular, yet probably there is no diſpoſition unadapted to ſome certain ſphere; but miſplace any, and it muſt appear ridiculous, though, in the intermediate degrees, not ſo glaringly as in the extremes of groſſneſs and delicacy.———My mind's eye is juſt now glancing on the two rival ſtatues, anciently deſigned for the temple of Minerva. The one, exact in its proportions, and exquiſitely finiſhed, charmed the nearly examining eye; but, unadapted for ſo bold a ſtation, made but a pitiful appearance when mounted in the front of the building. —The other, diſproportionate, rude, and uncalculated for cloſe inſpection; yet, when viewed in the place deſigned for it, appeared a very ſuitable figure.

Theſe

Theſe two ſtatues I conſider, the one as a man of the world, the other as a perſon of delicate ſenſibilities. But I will not graduate the application: *that*, as thou art maſter of the ſtory, thou canſt do thyſelf.

Perhaps my notions, in an extended latitude, may be wrong; but yet, if they are right with regard to myſelf, juſtify me: yea, if even *there* they are wrong, do not thou contemn me. With thee I have no reſerves—with none elſe can I venture to be explicit. I believe it is a conſciouſneſs that my ideas are very odd ones, which makes me ſo careful not to divulge them by an unreſtrained converſation.

Wedneſday Morning.

I wrote a deal to thee laſt night on the ſubject of my unfitneſs for trade. I ſhall not look over what I have written, to ſee what proof I have advanced of this unfitneſs; but I believe I omitted the principal one,

and that which gave occaſion to what I then wrote.

I have been *choufed*, Bountly, and that to a tolerable tune (there's a commercial phraſe to expreſs it)—but no matter.——Yet it piques me not a little that I, who have had an education ſuperior to many with whom I have concerns, and may be allowed to boaſt of ſome critical ſkill in things above the comprehenſion of the vulgar, ſhould be ſo *taken in* (there's a gambling phraſe, and, by analogy of profeſſion, a trading one too) by perſons every way my inferiors, except in the art of duplicity.

But, alas! my Bountly, I cannot aſſume ſo much ſavageneſs as to call in queſtion the ſolemn aſſurances of thoſe who endeavour to give me rational expectations; nor be ſo rude to give that indirect lie, ſo common in the commercial world, to one who never yet convinced me he was a villain.—Yet univerſal ſuſpicion ſeems to be neceſſary. 'Tis a diſagreeable ſubject this,

this, and I will have done with it—only obſerving, that Momus ſeemed to have reaſon on his ſide, when he blamed the goddeſs for making a man without a window in his breaſt.

But thou wilt tell me, Bountly, 'tis little leſs than treaſon in a commercial nation, to depreciate the principles of trade.

My friend, the providing and ſupplying one another with neceſſaries, dividing the advantage between the diſpoſer and the purchaſer (which I take to be the ſimple principle of commerce), is not what I have a ſuit againſt: but 'tis the perverſion of this principle when reduced to practice, that hurts me. And I believe, however diſagreeable the confeſſion may be, there are few people of liberal ideas, who have had any commercial concerns, but have felt what I have obſerved: even thou, though thy ſtation as a merchant may not be ſo obnoxious to the complaint, as the inferior lines of buſineſs, muſt, I am perſuaded, on

ſome

ſome occaſions have felt thyſelf awkwardly ſituated; for thy intellects, though perhaps endued with a leſs degree of irritability, or a greater of reſolution than mine, are nevertheleſs (and 'tis evident in the ſteadineſs of thy attachments) too nicely touched for a mere man of the world.

I ſaid I had been *taken in.* Now, leſt thou ſhouldſt think that what I allude to, be of ſuch conſequence as to injure my ſcanty fortune, I will relieve thy anxiety (for I know thou art intereſted in my concerns) by aſſuring thee it is a mere trifle: I regard it not, except as it mortifies my pride in the idea of being over-reached. But be the hypocrite abaſhed—I have no cauſe for ſhame.

'Tis a mere trifle, Bountly; it cannot injure me: and had it been matter of moment, I think I have philoſophy enough, juſt now, to practiſe the old precept: "*Time in ſecundis, in adverſis ſpera.*" But, to prevent thy conjecture, I'll tell thee the circumſtance.

Thou

Thou kneweſt Carvile, didſt thou not?—I think thou didſt. He had conſiderable dealings with my father, and, in conſequence, was now a conſiderable debtor to me.

Yeſterday I waited on him. He received me with a great degree of apparent frankneſs: yea, he ſeemed even glad to ſee me. He ſcanned my account, acknowledged its juſtneſs, and told me it ſhould be inſtantly diſcharged; but, on recollection, inſiſted on my regaling myſelf a little, firſt, with what the houſe afforded. It being late in the afternoon, I choſe a cup of coffee. His daughter attended us.

He entertained me during our repaſt with a deal of what they call heartineſs; and I, as I wiſhed to do, thought him ſincere. He paſſed many encomiums, which were grateful to me, on my late father: but, though they were grateful to me as a ſon, they deſerve not repetition, as they were only of the common caſt. At length the converſation adverting to buſineſs, he took occa-

occaſion to enlarge on the neceſſity there was of a man's keeping a good ſtock of *the ready* (as he called it) by him, if he wiſhed to *do a thing well:* in this, he obſerved, my father was always happy. But it was not every one's lot to command it, which he inſtanced in himſelf: remarking that he could that day have bought a large quantity of a certain commodity on ſuch terms as to have gained forty per cent. by it; and which he could, *for certain*, have had a *return* for in three days. But," continued he, "I had not caſh enough by me, d'ye ſee; and I did not chooſe to trouble my neighbours (for, look you, a man ſhould never lower his credit at home; I'd ſooner, if I wiſhed to borrow money, apply to a diſtant acquaintance than to a neighbour by far); not but I could have had it of twenty people: and truly I was almoſt tempted, juſt as you came in, to have done ſo; but I am glad now, on your account, that I did not."

I replied, I ſhould be ſorry if on my

account he forbore to take the advantage which ſeemed to offer itſelf to his acceptance, as three or four days would not at all interfere with my convenience.

He thanked me, but ſaid—No, he would not ſink himſelf in the opinion of his acquaintance; and nothing would do that ſo readily as the giving them reaſon to ſuppoſe him ſhort of caſh. He was thought, he ſaid, to be a moneyed man, and he found his account in being thought ſo: and, to be ſure, he was ſeldom out of *the requiſite*, though it happened at preſent that he had not enough to anſwer to his wiſhes: but no man could be always provided; and certainly 'twas a fooliſh whim of his to be ſo very ſcrupulous of applying to his neighbours. He had done more for many of them repeatedly; for 'twas but a trifle he was ſhort, only about fifty pounds.

The man's obſervations, his heartineſs, his long acquaintance with my father, and I know not what, ſet ſomething (a fooliſh

ſome-

ſomething perhaps thou wilt call it, Bountly) a working in my breaſt, whoſe impulſe I obeyed, without deliberation, even to the eaſing my pocket-book of a bank note of forty-five pounds, which I had received in my way through Bath; and which I tendered to Carvile, deſiring him to embrace (as he had hinted it was not yet too late) what fortune ſeemed to throw in his way; and, as I ſhould remain a few days in Briſtol, I would wait for the reimburſement till he had diſpoſed of the commodity.

He accepted it: and I haſtened away, to avoid a flood of acknowledgments which was pouring upon me; and, for ſome hours, enjoyed the idea of having done my father's friend eſſential ſervice. But I was duped.

Bountly, I am the dupe of my ſenſibilities. No—that's wrong! If a man offer me poiſon in the friendly glaſs, and I am injured by it, am I a fool, or he a villain? —There are ſome things which the moſt

ſuſpicious can hardly ſuſpect; yet, be the deceit ever ſo highly finiſhed, the deceived is more pointed at, as a ſimpleton, than the deceiver ſcorned as a raſcal. But why this ſhould be ſo, I cannot comprehend; unleſs that mankind, intuitively conſidering human life as a depredatory war, look on the frank, generous heart, as a diſciplined regiment do on thoſe among them who are called the aukward ſquad, becauſe they have not learnt their exerciſe.

I am not of a ſuſpicious diſpoſition, I think; yet, if I were, I might have been deceived. Birds are timorous, yet they have been known to peck at the painted grape.

Thus then it ſtands, Bountly—I have been deceived by infidiouſneſs. And who but may be ſo deceived?—"Hypocriſy is the only evil that walks unſeen."—But ſhall I ſhut up my heart becauſe it may be in the power of a knave *there* to intrude himſelf? Judgment, thou wilt ſay, ſhould have the

controul

controul of the feelings. To what avail, if even that be fallible?—The generous man may be weak; but he who impoſes on generoſity is wicked. Yet caution is a neceſſary leſſon: I wiſh it was not ſo much like ſuſpicion.

But to proceed. Before I retired to reſt, which was not till late, I learnt, by mere chance, that Carvile's credit was worſe than nothing; and my hoſt, without my explaining myſelf, informed me of four ſeveral writs that were that day iſſued againſt him.

I am an inconſiſtent being, Bountly; and I am not pleaſed with myſelf on that account. While I am open to the concerns, and feel myſelf affected with the diſtreſſes, of all mankind, I am ſo tenacious of what concerns myſelf, that, except to thee, I can ſeldom prevail on myſelf to communicate it. Yet 'tis not ſuſpicion; 'tis a certain cloſeneſs of diſpoſition, the reſult of a conviction that I do not think and act like the reſt of the world; and conſequently that, to the buſy,

buſtling part (and which makes up the bulk of it), the language of my ſoul would be an unknown tongue. But there are occaſions when this cloſeneſs is a ſource of repentance. To thee, indeed, I can ſay any thing: but to obtrude one's own affairs on the attention of an indifferent perſon, would it not be torturing his complaiſance? Yet methinks I wiſh I had tried the experiment twenty-four hours ago; it would have ſaved at leaſt my forty-five pounds: for had I told Mr. D—— (my hoſt) *yeſterday* what I told him but an *hour ſince*, thou wouldſt not have had cauſe again to call me weak (as I know thou wilt), nor ſhould I now be repenting of an act *in itſelf* not to be repented of.

Mr. D—— went this morning with me to Carvile's. But 'twas too late—he had already abſconded.

Weak wilt thou call me? Yes.—But therefore ſhall my heart, like the receding moon, be half hid from thee? No.—Yet, if thou know all, thou wilt call me weak indeed.

deed.—His daughter, a young widow, without reſource in her diſtreſs, her babe hanging at her breaſt, turned into the ſtreets! ——Mercileſs creditors! had *ſhe* too injured you?——She looked at me. She was witneſs to what paſſed between me and her father. She looked——I cannot deſcribe her look. Diſtreſs and ſhame contended in her countenance. Bountly, her babe might accept what, from one of my age, the mother might have refuſed.

But do not be alarmed, my friend; I have not ſtraitened myſelf: though, to the extent of what my fortune will allow (and farther than that were at once to preclude the intention), have I not an undoubted right to purchaſe me ſuch pleaſures as I can enjoy?

I find I ſhall not be able to finiſh my affairs in Briſtol for ſome time yet; when I have, I ſhall return to G——, where I hope to find a letter from my only friend.

Only friend! the *long* reality of the thing has rendered the expreſſion habitual to me. But is it not *now* injurious to Miſs Brudenell? She too is my very good *friend*. Thou wilt ſmile, I know; but *that* title ſhe deſerves: a *leſs* would be ungrateful; a *dearer* would be vanity from *me*, it would be ungrateful too. Ought I not to bleſs my lot, poſſeſſing two ſuch friends? But Penſon's nature is heavy; even his enjoyments are tinged with——I'll chaſe the reflection.—Farewel.

W. WANLEY PENSON.

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

Briſtol.

BOUNTLY, I am yet in Briſtol, at the houſe of Mr. D—— (this I ought to have told thee in my laſt, as certain circumſtances therein related may have required

quired ſuch an explanation; but method ever eſcapes me); and as I am likely to remain here ſome time, I will tell thee how I came acquainted with him.

Thou knoweſt my humour, that I prefer travelling on foot (as my time is ſeldom limited) to jogging on a horſe, or dozing in a poſt-chaiſe: for why ſhould we enſlave the animal creation, Bountly? or exact that tribute they owe us but in caſes of exigence? But this apart.—My motive, I acknowledge, is in general more ſelfiſh; namely, to indulge a curioſity for contemplating whatever attracts my attention; to do which, 'tis neceſſary, on a journey, frequently to deviate from a direct road.

Through ſuch a deviation, I, on my progreſs to Bath, in my way hither, loſt myſelf, and wandered into a little village, in the duſk of the evening.

In order to enquire my way, I made up to a decent looking houſe. It had a court before

before it, planted round with trees cut in arches.

I entered the wicket; and perceived, by the light in the windows, that it was a ſhop, and a more capital one than I ſhould have expected to find in ſuch a place.

In this ſhop were aſſembled four perſons. One of them, a friendly-looking man, was the maſter; another appeared to be a clergyman; the third, by his dreſs, a ſtranger; and the fourth I could not gueſs at.

Theſe four, after ſome little time (for the courteous ſhopkeeper inſiſted on my reſting awhile), I found were ſitting in judgment on a ſilly production of mine—a few verſes which had ſtrayed into the village before me. I was at firſt puzzled at this circumſtance; but afterwards learnt they had juſt before been brought in by a perſon that had picked them up: ſo I muſt have dropt them as I wandered round the village, in ſearch of a way into it.

I ſaid

I ſaid they were ſitting in judgment:—truly they were; and my poor rhymes were moſt ſeverely rated. But what vexed me was, not that they were rated worſe than they deſerved, but becauſe he who was moſt eager in cenſuring, did it generally by *half* ſentences; or, if he deigned to deliver a *whole* one, took care to diveſt even that of a reaſon. Myſelf, indeed, could have ſuggeſted many in juſtification of his cenſure; but ſhould not they who think proper to condemn, for their own credit's ſake, qualify their ſentence by evidencing its propriety?

If criticiſm anſwer any end at all, it muſt be to inſtruct and amend: but if the critique be delivered in a dogmatical, ſententious manner, and unſupported by proof, its end is defeated, and itſelf deſerves the condemnation it denounces.

That *ſmartneſs* too, I think, Bountly, which ſome critics affect, is equally as ridiculous as any thing it attempts to ridicule.

If it be ever allowable, it can only be when played off in deriſion of compoſitions where an unſeemly ſmartneſs is affected: though even there, methinks, it were as much out of character for a critic, as it would be for a preacher in the pulpit to mimic a beau, in order to expoſe perſonal vanity.

Witticiſm may raiſe a laugh, but cannot convince the judgment. A judge upon the bench would loſe much of the reverence otherwiſe due to him, if he affected to diſplay there his wit rather than his candour; and his knack at a joke, rather than the ſtrength of his diſcriminating powers.

Criticiſm is equally uſeful and venerable, but only ſo while it acts up to its character; to do which, it muſt be ſerious, candid, and rational.

But, O Bountly! what a thing is man! How conceited univerſally! and how groſsly ſupercilious, if he fancies himſelf poſſeſſed of any qualification ſuperior to thoſe around him!

But

But to proceed. One of theſe quartem-viri predeſcribed (I will not be ſo invidious as to identify which, farther than by excepting the good-natured ſhopkeeper, and him who appeared to be a ſtranger) being of that claſs who, proud of an imagined excellence, think implicit faith ought to follow their ipſe dixit, pronounced, as I have before ſaid in general terms, very dictatorially on my poor verſes: whilſt the other of the two unexcepted ones diſſented from every thing advanced; but in ſuch a manner that precluded any obligation to his good-nature, as it was evident he was not actuated by any conſideration for the poor unknown author, but merely by a ſpirit of contention, and an eagerneſs to mortify the conceit of his companion. Thus Alexander ſet his face againſt the pride of Perſia; not that he regarded who ſuffered under it, but becauſe he could not endure the idea of another man in the world ſo proud as himſelf.

During their altercation, my mind was employed in forming a ſimile. A ſilly circumſtance, that had before occurred to me that ſame evening, *would* obtrude itſelf on my recollection. I do not know but ill-nature had ſome ſhare in the compariſon, though; for who, however lightly he may value his own works, can bear unmoved to hear them vilified by others?——Thus it was:—On the ſide of the road I had been paſſing, were three aſſes; one of which, having urined, had ſcarcely moved from the ſpot, when the other two, with the phiz of phyſicians, gravely marched up to the puddle.

I am fond of obſerving the affections of brutes, Bountly. 'Tis pity, methinks, that we have no faculty whereby to diſcern what kind of notions they poſſeſs. 'Tis evident they have memory, which preſuppoſes the poſſeſſion of (ſomething like) ideas: the uncertainty, then, is only how far they have the power of comparing

thoſe ideas, and which alone conſtitutes what we call reflection. Yet, without ſuch a power in ſome degree, methinks mere memory were uſeleſs. Swayed by this inference, how often do I form the wild wiſh of knowing what the horſe I ride, or the dog that trots after me, thinks of me—perhaps as of a god, perhaps as of a devil.—No, I truſt, not that. Poor Tray here, for inſtance—I ſhould deteſt the idea of myſelf, if I thought my treatment of thee, poor brute, could induce thee to conſider me as thy devil. However, this being a wiſh not to be gratified in reality, I frequently ſuffer fancy to interpret what bids defiance to my reaſon.

'Twas to indulge ſuch an interpretation that I ſtopt oppoſite the aſſes. The two ſerioſos were inhaling the ſteam of their companion's exundation. What can engage them thus intently? thought I. Criticiſm, whiſpered fancy. 'Twas an unſeemly thought, but not more ſo than the

action

action of the brutes which inſpired it; one of whom now lifting its head from the ſteam, and bringing its browzing point into a ſtraight line with its neck, levelled it point blank againſt the moon; at the ſame time writhing its muſcles ſo as to draw up its noſe into a curve, nearly as crooked as the figure it was levelled againſt. (Hence probably *Addiſon* took his hint of a critical noſe; for this action, doubtleſs, he had noticed in theſe grave animals; as thou too, Bountly, I dare ſay, haſt often done).—"Yes, they are certainly criticiſing," repeated Fancy. And the production of their companion ſeemed to afford their critical reliſh moſt delicious diſguſt: for preſently the ſecond aſs put itſelf in the ſame poſture with the other, with the addition of contorting its upper lip till it covered its offended noſtril; whilſt the other, having recovered of its paroxyſm, very aſſiduouſly applied its olfactors for the acquirement of another doſe of nauſea.

Strange!

Strange! thought I, that theſe ſhould be ſo *intent* to inhale what at the ſame time they *affect* to loath!—Who impoſed on them the penance, or who is beholden to their ſupererogation? They might have paſſed the puddle, and left it to be hummed over by the gadding fly.—Do mankind afford any traces of an affection of this kind, Bountly? Anſwer thou.

How long theſe animals might have continued their invidious ſcrutiny I know not; but probably ſo long as to have loſt their ſuppers thereby, had not two boys, who I believe belonged to them, come running up; one of whom, by the *argumentum baculinum*, ſhortened their dumb logic of its full inference, and drove them off; and that for the mere ſake of plaſhing the ſubject of their contemplation over his companion, who was purſuing him.——But this is the way of the world, my Bountly. An ill-natured deed is ſeldom avenged from a good-natured motive: and as, in the animal world, the

voracious, by deſtroying the voracious, prevent their overſpreading the earth, and preſerve the gentle from extirpation; ſo, in the moral, is one vice a check upon another

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I am juſt returned, Bountly, from ſtrolling about in this great *hive* of mankind.—What a buz in every quarter! Every one buſy in the attainment of ſomething that excites his deſire, and animates him into action: whilſt I, methinks, am a *drone* amidſt it.

Yet wherefore is all this buſtle?—What a dupe is man!———Happineſs, under one ſhape or another, is ever the object of his purſuit: and when, fancying he has caught it under one ſhape, he finds himſelf deceived, he nevertheleſs, with a priſtine eagerneſs, ſtarts after it under another. Thus, ever purſuing what he never comes up with, he runs out the length of his anxious life: but whether moſt to be pitied

for

for his diſappointments, or deſpiſed for the folly of his expectations, who can decide? Yet let me reflect—If the buſy man deſerve either, I deſerve it more. He, though deceived, makes a ſhift to paſs life tolerably eaſy, anticipating in the purſuit ſomething of the happineſs he purſues: whilſt I, accuſtomed too much to conſider the conſummation, find myſelf averſe to the progreſs; which conſequently not only keeps me, in common with the reſt of the world, ſhort of ultimate felicity, but alſo precludes me its exhilarating antipaſt. But thou, Bountly, knoweſt it is not without cauſe that I have addicted myſelf to look forward to the conſummation; for, alas! how ſadly have all my views of happineſs hitherto terminated!

I have juſt glanced over what I had written previous to my ramble. It diſpleaſes me.

That ideas, ſomething like thoſe I have communicated, poſſeſſed me when I contemplated the aſſes on the road, is true; and it is likewiſe true that they repoſſeſſed me on witneſſing the critique at the ſhopkeeper's. But how ſilly appears the communication! The pencil of the *facetious* might have touched ſuch a ſcene with humour—under *mine*, it languiſhes. I am half minded to expunge it: but it ſhall remain; to convince thee how pitiful a figure thy friend would make were he to follow thy advice, and attempt to flutter in the light plumage of jocularity.

Thou often thinkeſt me too ſerious. Probably I am ſo; but it is my conſtitution: and a man never appears to ſuch diſadvantage, as when he attempts to be what nature has not made him.

The greateſt oddity may be amuſing; but affectation, in every ſhape, muſt diſguſt.

When *I ſigh*, my ſoul is in the aſpiration; if I *laugh*, 'tis out of complaiſance

to

to him whoſe hilarity ſeems to demand ſuch a tribute to be paid to it.

But after what is it that I have been loſing myſelf? What is *criticiſm* to *me?*—However, as it has led me conſiderably out of my way, and as ill-nature was probably the principal ſpur to my deviation, let me, under a different influence, ſtep a little further ere I return, in order to ſacrifice, at the ſhrine of juſtice, to the candour of thoſe literary characters who, *as* men, feel *for* men; who, as *authors*, ſympathize with their brethren; who, convinced that "*humanum eſt errare*," treat with gentleneſs even where they cannot applaud, puniſhing nothing with ſeverity but impudence and conceit.—Need I ſay more to have it underſtood, that the characters I allude to are the Reviewers?

Thou knoweſt I once, in a puerile thing (which ſome, who *knew* its author, *therefore*

held in contempt), experienced the candour of thoſe perſonages: and probably, had not my mind been long ill at eaſe, that candour would ere now have tempted me once more to put their patience to trial. But, in my preſent ſtate, what could I preſent the world with, but the whims of a fancy become habitually melancholy? Wherefore, as their candour can henceforth avail me nothing, though with a wiſh, nevertheleſs, that all critics were as liberal in *reaſon-giving* as the Reviewers (for even the laſh, to effect its end, ſhould be given with good-nature, and the *rod* with the *reaſon* of it), I will now return thy attention to the ſhopkeeper's at L——; where, beſides thoſe I already have mentioned, I found—unexpectedly found——my friend, thou canſt not gueſs whom!

But why have I thus long delayed to inform thee?—Why, even till now, trifled on ſubjects that affect not me, nor can yield thee pleaſure?

Alas,

Alas, my Bountly! I have ſo long been inured to the cuſtom of concealing thoſe ideas that truly excite my ſenſibility, leſt my fellow-men ſhould be diſguſted with their extravagancy, that whatſoever touches my heart, my expreſſion habitually avoids; whilſt at the ſame time I frequently purſue, with a feigned avidity, ſubjects I care not three farthings about.

But why to thee do I hang out falſe colours? Truly my mind was not in the act. To my friend ſhall I not appear my*ſelf?*—Yet ſtill how like a child, that has been chidden for its cravings, do I trifle, and heſitate to expreſs that which is uppermoſt in my boſom!

——'Twas Betty Barnes—even Betty herſelf, my Linny's faithful *ſervant!*——O pride!—*Servant?* my heart dictated *friend* inſtead. Let me follow its dictates—admit the term, my Bountly; 'twill be no diſparagement to the memory of thy dear loſt ſiſter; for who loves me with affection,

and adheres to me with fidelity, is my friend, however mean his ſtation: and Betty—but thou knoweſt Betty's love and faithfulneſs. I thought ſhe had yet been at T——, but I found her at L——.

'Twas a diſcovery as pleaſing to me as it was unexpected. My heart rejoiced at the ſight of one with whom it need not perſevere in its reſerves. It unbraced inſtantly, and I was preſently at home with her.

I cannot give thee a better idea of what I felt on this occaſion, than by relating a circumſtance which once occurred to me in croſſing Saliſbury Plain. I was benighted, and loſt my way. I rode in this direction, and in that, to no purpoſe; for nothing could I diſcover that could ſet me right: till at laſt I relinquiſhed all hopes, and let my horſe ramble as it pleaſed, merely for the ſake of motion; for it was a cold biting night.

In this manner I proceeded ſome time (expecting no alternative till morning, and bidding

bidding defiance to the cold with all the ſpirits I could muſter); when unexpectedly I came up to an edifice of a moſt unuſual conſtruction, raiſed as it were by enchantment in the midſt of the deſert.

I ſurveyed it attentively by the dim twinkle of a few faint ſtars, but could form no conjecture concerning it that reſembled probability.

On one ſide were four horſes tied, eating hay that was put for them; but as to the building itſelf, ſilence ſeemed to have taken the ſole poſſeſſion of it.

However, I approached it, and called, in hopes of being directed into ſome road; when preſently a man looked from a little window, and after a few queſtions courteouſly offered me a ſhare of his bed.

I accepted his courteſy. He flung a cloth over my horſe, and confined it with the others; and in ten minutes I was ſnug on a warm comfortable pallet: my limbs reſuming their wonted flexibility, even

whilſt

whilſt I almoſt queſtioned the reality of my enjoyment.

'Twas a travelling houſe, built on wheels, ſome part of which having been injured the preceding day, had obliged it to halt in this unlikely place.

And the meeting with Betty Barnes at L—— was as unexpected a ſolace to my mind, which I had endeavoured to brace up for the encountering of a cold world, as the meeting with a warm bed on Saliſbury Plain was to my body.

But pleaſing as the rencounter was, it ſerved eventually but to render my ſpirits too languid for converſation.

My hoſt and his friends certainly thought me—what indeed I am, but what I am not ambitious of appearing—a man unlike mankind. But Betty knew me, and ſympathized with me.

Thou canſt not think what a crowd of ideas ruſhed on my mind at the ſight of Betty Barnes—ideas that made compari-

ſon

ſon of themſelves—the pleaſing paſt, the diſtreſſing paſt, the forlorn preſent, and the unpromiſing future. She wore a ribbon which I remembered; it reminded me of the moſt pleaſant circumſtance of my life: whilſt her favourite puſs (excuſe me, Bountly) revived in my memory what I labour to forget, becauſe thou telleſt me I ought to forget it; my Melinda's brother tells me I ought to forget my Melinda! Impoſſible.—But I have brought myſelf, I think, to recollect her with ſerenity, except on certain occaſions which unawares awake my ſoul to the keeneſt ſenſibility.

Haſt thou not ſometimes, when amuſing thyſelf with a book, unexpectedly met with a quotation, which, having formerly puzzled thee to conſtrue, has recalled quick to thy memory all the anxieties of thy ſchool hours? How ſenſibly they return on the mind! Diſtance is annihilated, and the paſt ſeems preſent; till one rouſes, and pleaſingly diſcovers the ſleight of the imagination.

So

So is it frequently with me. My mind, when engaged perhaps in ſome amuſement to wear away the tedious hours, is filled, on the ſudden chance of ſome trifling incident, with ideas which like ghoſts ſtart up and deſtroy its tranquillity. The pleaſing paſt recurs—what do I feel, when recollection tells me 'tis irrecoverably gone! The diſtreſſing paſt preſents itſelf to my imagination, and I agonize over the ſcene; the forlorn preſent heightens the diſtreſs; and the unpromiſing future ſhades the whole with a ſettled melancholy. But I tire thee with inadequate deſcription; for at laſt I muſt leave thee to gueſs (if it be poſſible thou canſt gueſs) the exigencies of a mind ſo eaſily acceſſible as mine.

I ſlept at the hoſpitable ſhopkeeper's; and the next morning, after breakfaſt, ſet off for Bath, with this Mr. D——, at whoſe houſe I now am; and whom I have mentioned before, in this letter, as the perſon who, by his dreſs, appeared to be a ſtranger, or traveller,

traveller, at the forementioned ſhopkeeper's.

He had purpoſely ſent his horſe on before him; himſelf walking with me, in order, as he ſaid, to enjoy the pleaſure of my company.

Alas, Bountly! I cannot conceive what he could diſcover in me, to induce him to think my company deſirable; unleſs he had the penetration to deſcry through the gloom which I am conſcious ever ſurrounds me, that wiſh which is ever ready formed in my breaſt—that every man may be happy in his own way, though *my* way be inſurmountably obſtructed.

I acknowledge there was ſomething in Mr. D——'s manner which preſently prejudiced *me* in *his* favour. He ſeemed a man, indeed, of no rich ſentiment; but there was a certain——what?——ſimplicity, I think I muſt call it——in his behaviour, which ſeemed to beſpeak one's confidence. There appeared alſo a certain ſe-

renity

renity in his countenance, which evidenced an internal ſatisfaction; and a kind of philanthropy, which ſeemed to wiſh others as happy as himſelf.

Mr. D—— is a religioniſt: and, on farther acquaintance, I find that he not only appears to be, but really imagines himſelf, *happy*. And undoubtedly, as all happineſs conſiſts in imagination, he is ſo.

He attributes his happineſs to his religious ſentiments—one the infallible conſequence of the other. Poſſible.

Oh, Bountly! be it enthuſiaſm, if thou wilt have it ſo, that renders him happy; even ſuch an enthuſiaſm, methinks, is more to be deſired than the moſt conſummate human wiſdom.

On this ſubject, as thou art no ſtranger to my general way of thinking, thou wilt little expect that *I* ſhould depreciate rationality. But to what do its utmoſt efforts lead us? In all things, it rather convinces us of what is *not*, than of what *is*; leaving

us perpetually to bemoan our narrow faculties: whilſt, under the influence of enthuſiaſm, we feel thoſe faculties ſo enlarged, that we at once can graſp, or think we graſp (which amounts much to the ſame thing, in producing ſatisfaction), that which reaſon is ever endeavouring to define, without the hope of obtaining——happineſs.

Oh, Bountly! for ſuch an enthuſiaſm to take poſſeſſion of the breaſt of thy friend, and elevate it from its long deſpondency! But it will not be. Yet had I never been taught to inveſtigate, perhaps too nicely, the cauſes of things—had I not been convinced how few things we can be certain of, and to what abſurdities the power of imagination can lead mankind—I might now have been as happy a man as Mr. D——.

We are taught, my friend, to believe, that he who detects a fallacy does a ſervice to ſociety. I cannot be always of that opinion.

I had a goblet which had been in our family ſome generations. I believed it to be

be ſilver, and valued it; and indeed valued myſelf on the poſſeſſion of ſuch an antique voucher of family opulence. A perſon convinced me lately the metal was counterfeit; and I aſſure thee I can hardly yet forgive him for undeceiving me.

What ſignifies what it is that makes us happy, ſo we *are* but happy? He who undeceives mankind in that which tends in any degree to their felicity, inſtead of a benefit, does them an unkindneſs.

Does then happineſs conſiſt in ignorance? thou wilt ſay.

I anſwer—No; but, as virtue is a mean between oppoſite vices, ſo if any degree of happineſs be allotted man, it muſt be found, I think, between ignorance, which like cold benumbs our ſenſations, and that ſubtle degree of ratiocination, which, like extreme heat, quickens us to perceptions unadapted to our ſituation.

A man of moderate capacity, whoſe mind is a little rarefied by the glow of religion,

ligion, is a man whom of all men I envy; for, reſpecting the things of time, he can be active, yet ſerene; and, reſpecting the things of eternity, ſpeculative, yet confident.

Much has been ſuſpected by ſome of the ſeditious tendency of enthuſiaſm. And indeed there have been inſtances where a deſigning hypocrite has found means to pervert the ſpiritual views of a ſet of ſimple men, ſo as to terminate them in temporal proſpects. But inſtances of this kind are rare. The general turn of the mind of man is not ſufficiently enthuſiaſtic for them to occur frequently: religious enthuſiaſm, the contrary of ſuperſtition (which in its ſeveral degrees ſpreads over the face of the whole earth), being a plant to be found only here and there in a warm corner; a plant (to carry on the metaphor) rather rank in itſelf than propagative, and conſequently inſufficient to feed the hopes of the ambitious, and unlikely to tempt the culture of the turbulent.

And in this enlightened age, and country particularly, ſhould one ſee a man of acute parts and deep penetration affecting the flaming enthuſiaſt; and ſhould one feel inclined to ſuſpect him of ſome ſiniſter deſign, ſuch faculties, ſo diſguiſed, giving room for ſuſpicion; they being in general (though there be no rule without an exception) not the ſoil likely to produce what we underſtand by the term enthuſiaſm—I ſay, ſhould one now meet with ſuch a character, and, of conſequence, be inclined to ſuſpect it, yet of what *could* one ſuſpect it? Not of diſturbing ſtates, or overturning empires. Men with *theſe* views muſt now make uſe of other means to accompliſh them. Religion, if it was once a ſword unnaturally wielded by the aſpiring, being now a mere worn-out drill bow, in the hands of the humble mechanic: or, in other words, learning having now diſpelled the more groſs gloom of ignorance from among all ranks, and philoſophy found means

means a little to lift the hood from the eyes of blindly-ruſhing zeal; it is not probable there can be now a ſet of men among us ſo ſilly as to be impoſed on to the abetting ſuch unfeaſible projects, nor a man of parts ſo mad as to attempt them by ſuch an exploded method.

The utmoſt ſiniſter view, then, ſuch a character can be ſuſpected of, muſt be, either the getting a name, a fortune, or a wife; neither of which, if accompliſhed, could be ſuppoſed to unſettle the church, or affect the ſtate.

Thus far, my friend, have I indulged ſuſpicion on the ground of poſſibility—even as far as reaſon can ſuffer it to proceed.

Yet even on *theſe* grounds (though for my own part I am ſo charitably inclined, as to think ſuſpicion can ſeldom find even theſe to proceed on; the leaders of thoſe whom we call enthuſiaſts appearing to me to be as truly poſſeſſed with, and in earneſt in, their perſuaſion as any of the followers)—

yet, I ſay, ſuſpecting, as far as in this age can be reaſonable, the conſequences art may be capable of working from enthuſiaſm, which, in itſelf, I take for granted is too rapt, and abſtracted to form any tangible deſign, I cannot but ſmile at the ſtir made by my countreymen, though bluſhing at the ſame time for their raſhneſs, when I hear of the riots which have, within theſe late years, been raiſed on, perhaps, a ſimple harmleſs fellow, who, mounted on a ſtool, has exerted himſelf to diſſuade his neighbours from ſtriving for the palm of unrighteouſneſs, by breaking each others limbs at a cudgel playing; or from drowning reflection by the imbibition of deſtructive liquors; adviſing them, if they muſt fight, to encounter their luſts; or, if they muſt drink, to imbibe the Spirit of Heaven.

I am not now, my friend, on ſuppoſitious ground. Inſtances have been many wherein even magiſtrates, who, in diſregard of the laws, have ſuffered thouſands to aſſemble at a boxing-

a boxing-match, and have overlooked the frequently alarming conſequences of ſuch a lawleſs concourſe; yet, nevertheleſs, have thought the church and ſtate endangered by a cobler's aſſembling his family of an evening to ſing a hymn. How abſurd!

The mind of man indeed is apt to ſhoot into exuberances, that need to be reſtrained. Enthuſiaſm, in the common acceptation of the word, may be ſuch an exuberance: but there are other kinds of enthuſiaſm beſides the religious, and I judge too at this day, much more obnoxious to the peace of ſociety.

But whither have I rambled? Ought I to wonder at inconſiſtency who am frequently inconſiſtent with myſelf? a greater inſtance of which I could not well give, than by thus verging towards a ſubject ſo oppoſite to my nature as religious polemics.

However, I flatter myſelf I have been drawn thus far, merely by an inſtinctive regard to common equity: for

if it be granted that all men are nearly alike *mad* in their favourite purſuits, is it not intereſting to obſerve how boiſterous Phrenzy is ever ſtriving to force the ſtrait waiſtcoat on ſighing Melancholy, as the more dangerous thing?

But I obſerved to thee, this morning, that one vice is ſtill a check upon another; and who knows (whatever I may have previouſly argued) but that the various exuberances of the human mind may be ordained each the beſt counterpoiſe to its oppoſite? For inſtance, what elſe could be an equivalent for the zealot, who, in oppoſition to the worldling, either teaſes or ſhames him into ſomething like a religion; whilſt, on the other hand, the worldling ſometimes takes the liberty to cudgel a fanatic into common ſenſe?

I ſaid above, I could not conceive what Mr. D—— diſcovered in me to induce him to

to affect my company: but, on recollection, I think it probable that ſomething of that inſtinctive regard to the natural equality of all men, which I have hinted at a little previouſly, may have tranſpired in my deportment ſo as to conciliate his eſteem.

Thou knoweſt that I have ever made it a point to treat men of all perſuaſions with reſpect; for, in matters that admit not of certainty, each has equal claim to attention.

Perhaps too, as I hate tyranny as well of wit as of power, thou mayſt have obſerved a diſpoſition in me to take the part of the deſpiſed religious ſectary, when, on account of his tenets, he has been the butt of a company wherein I have chanced to be preſent: a diſpoſition inciting me to endeavour to defend his principles, or, at leaſt, to give a ſample that they admitted of as much reaſon (perhaps more ſo) as theirs who took it for granted they had every thing on their ſide. And in this at-

tempt, I have ſeldom found it a very difficult taſk to enter the batteries of the aſſailants, and turn them on themſelves. For thoſe who think themſelves at liberty to make a joke of *one* religion, are ſeldom of that claſs who have much to advance in defence of *another*. *Offenſive* weapons are not always good *defenſive* ones.

Now if Mr. D—— obſerved ſomething of this diſpoſition in me, and I believe it may have been obſervable in a mixed converſation, during breakfaſt, at the ſhopkeeper's at L——, his friendlineſs may have been inſpired by a kind of ſomething bordering on gratitude. This I think probable, as the heart of man is never more eaſily won than by ſomething that flatters its foible. Beſides, from my ſerious and penſive caſt, he might have been induced to imagine that I myſelf was a religioniſt, and might have found his curioſity excited to know more of me: or, who knows? perhaps from my unprejudiced manner, he might

might have deemed me a ſubject fit to receive ſome religious impreſſion, and conſequently, as the *wiſh* to ſuch an effect ſeems to mix itſelf with every urbanity of the religious, he might have *hoped* to make me a convert. For though he addreſſed nothing particularly to me, yet he frequently took occaſion, on our walk, to let me know he had found that whereon his ſoul could reſt: ſometimes venturing obliquely to wiſh that I was as happy as himſelf.

Could ſuch a good-natured wiſh excite diſguſt, my Bountly? By no means. I wiſh the ſame thing. But how could it be? He wiſhed me as happy as himſelf; but then he wiſhed that happineſs brought about by the ſame means.

Mr. D—— is no philoſopher. He makes no allowance for conſtitution or education. One man ſhall grow plump on ſoup maigre, while another ſhall remain lank as Pharaoh's lean kine, though he feed on turtle and ortolan.

Diffe-

Different aliment Mr. D—— will readily allow to different *bodies*, but not to different minds. *Theſe* muſt be regaled alike, not only with regard to the meat, but even the cookery.

Were I ſuch a man as Mr. D——, probably I ſhould be as happy as he (for happy he is, comparatively); and as I am not, yet from my ſoul I wiſh I could be happy, even in the way he preſcribes: though I know the wiſh is vain: for what am I to do? Can I change my nature?—Can a tranſverſe wiſh—yea, can the efforts of volition ſhorten the concatenation of ideas linked to my exiſtence? I am not obſtinate: I wiſh to be convinced, becauſe I am told it would conduce to my felicity:—but who ſhall convince me? I would not *wiſh* to queſtion what Mr. D—— aſſerts; but if the queſtion riſe ſpontaneouſly, how muſt it be ſatisfied? I cannot extirpate the thought, without annihilating my exiſtence.

"Behold yon temple," ſays a ſhort-ſighted

ed man; "how beautifully it terminates the proſpect!" "I ſee the temple," replies a perſon of more extenſive viſion, "and it adds a grandeur to the ſcene, but it by no means terminates the proſpect; for I ſee many objects beyond it, that attract my attention."

This is the caſe in all ſpeculations: yet, as I ſaid above, I can by no means be angry with thoſe well-wiſhing religioniſts (though their importunities may be frequently ill-timed) who wiſh to introduce one to what they conſider as felicities, no more than I would be angry with a good-natured child, who, becauſe he found a pleaſure in it himſelf, importuned me to mount his hobby-horſe.

No, my Bountly, I would rather, had I opportunity, comply with the entreaty of each, and in order to perfect their happineſs, give countenance to their ſelf-complacency, by aſſuming the appearance of enjoyment. Yes, my friend, even thus far would

would a wiſh to conduce to the ſatisfaction of others carry me, though at the ſame time my boſom on its own account may heave the ſigh of deſpondency.

I have written thee an unconſcionable letter: but I devote the more time to thee, as the attention requiſite to bear a part in company ſo ebbs my ſpirits, that, methinks, I cannot with any pleaſure ſupport it long together; wherefore I frequently retire to collect myſelf, and (finding this the readieſt aſſiſtant thereto) indulge myſelf in writing to my friend.

I am ſhortly to attend Mr. D—— to his place of worſhip; after which probably I may have ſomething to add to the above obſervations, as he is of a ſect I have hitherto known only by report. Farewel.

W. WANLEY PENSON.

PENSON

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

Briſtol.

I HAVE juſt received a letter from Miſs Brudenell. Certainly I have two the beſt friends in the world. My Bountly (not to ſay what he *would* ſacrifice, were there a neceſſity) every day ſacrifices his patience; and Miſs Brudenell ſacrifices the little punctilios of her ſex, to ſooth me into an opinion of myſelf.

Sacrifice punctilio! Perhaps the expreſſion may imply more than is meant. Is there a point of decorum that forbids a lady to correſpond with the other ſex, love ſubjects out of the queſtion? If there be, 'tis the eſtabliſhment of a prude, or of a fool, and may be conſtrued either as affectation, or a want of ability to ſupport ſuch a correſpondence.

Love ſubjects! Thoſe are out of the queſtion, indeed, in the correſpondence betwixt Miſs Brudenell and me; unleſs they ſome-

ſometimes happen to be ſtarted in the third perſon, or in the infinitive mood.

Yes, Bountly, Sylvia has the beſt, the moſt open, the moſt generous of hearts. But thou art wrong, quite wrong, in thy conjectures.

She *loves* me, I believe: but how? Even as I love thee. That to do me a *pleaſure* (an expreſſion leſs comprehenſive would be inadequate to my idea) ſhe would conſider nothing as a reſtriction but the boundaries of virtue, I cannot but admit: but from what motive? Friendſhip the moſt pure. Her ſenſibilities render her romantic. She ſaw me when my ſpirits had forſaken me. She pitied me; ſhe ſoothed my dejection; ſhe imperceptibly ſoothed me into a ſufferance of life. That degree of calmneſs I at preſent enjoy is the child of her pity. I was as a withered plant in the deleterious ſhade: Sylvia appeared: ſhe noticed me; and laboured to reflect ſome rays of comfort through the gloom that ſurrounded me.

She ſucceeded: and probably ſhe thinks herſelf under ſome kind of obligation now (though it can be only an imaginary one) to preſerve what ſhe has revived.

Oh, my friend! was ſhe of humbler fortune, or I of a ſuperior one, then might there be ſome moiety of happineſs yet in ſtore for Penſon: for Sylvia's perſon, her accompliſhments, her ſenſibilities, are all exquiſite; and, methinks, though one half of myſelf is dejected to a degree of abaſement, the other half is notwithſtanding ſo proud as to eſteem nothing, beneath the character of a Sylvia, worthy to fill that place in my heart which was once poſſeſſed by my Linny. Oh, never ſhall a Briſtol ſtone degrade the ſocket that once held that jewel.

Nay, but ſuppoſe Sylvia mine—ſtart the queſtion. Could I then be happy? or rather ſay, could I render her ſo?

Alas! how?—Have I not heretofore aſked thee if dejection could generate joy, or a ſigh

ſigh light up pleaſure. Theſe compoſe my exiſtence; and, as happineſs conſiſts but in reciprocity, conſcious that with *theſe* I could not give it, ſo neither could I receive it.

But whither am I led? Did Sylvia know I ever connected love and herſelf in the ſame idea, ſhe would, ſhe muſt ſcorn me. Urge me then no more; for never will I forfeit her ineſtimable friendſhip, her invaluable confidence, by ſoliciting her love.

Beſides, in my preſent circumſtances, ſuch a ſolicitation would appear with the face of intereſt. My heart recoils at the thought, and I diſcharge it from further conſideration.

Miſs Brudenell tells me ſhe intends leaving Hampſtead in a few days; and, after calling on ſome relation by the way, propoſes taking a jaunt to G—— in her route to her aunt's at Haverford.

She touches delicately on the loſs of my ſiſter,

ſiſter, and tells me ſhe regrets it particularly *now*, as it will deprive her of the pleaſure (her own obliging expreſſion) of being my gueſt. However, ſhe hopes to have an opportunity, ſhe ſays, of obſerving what progreſs I have made in the leſſons ſhe gave me when we laſt parted (ſentimental ones, my Bountly), and inſiſts on a reſumption of her privileges as catechiſt and monitor; proffering me, in lieu of the ſuperintendance of my own mental motions, the correction of her digital ones on the muſical key, or the ſhaded tablet. Sweet friend!

She has had a ſuitor, ſhe tells me, whom her relations wiſhed her to encourage, but ſhe has refuſed him; and hopes when ſhe has an opportunity of giving me her reaſons for ſo doing, that I ſhall approve them. She has another *now* too, ſhe ſays, of whom ſhe will take my opinion before

ſhe diſcharges him; though ſhe believes, if my advice ſhould be acceptance, ſhe ſhall renounce her diſcipleſhip. How frank! how above forms and cuſtoms! Again let me repeat—Sylvia is the beſt of friends, of women.

But ſhe is not for me. To be diſconſolate is my portion.

In concluſion ſhe claims the performance of a promiſe, which, in an unwitting moment, I once yielded to her raillery—to direct her in the choice of a huſband, by deſcribing one calculated to make her particular diſpoſition happy.

This would be a nice point to handle, even in the moſt propitious moment; and now I really feel myſelf averſe to the undertaking. However, thus called on, I cannot but attempt ſomething of the kind: though, ſay what I will on the ſubject, I am afraid it may give umbrage; for advice is a moſt difficult thing to adminiſter, ſo as to make it ſit eaſy on the ſtomach.

Beſides,

Beſides, my paſſions are ſo at war with one another, and my reaſon with all (eſpecially when I am under the neceſſity, as in this caſe I ſhall be, of adverting to ſcenes of tenderneſs and affection), that I am conſcious I am not adequate to the taſk. I think I muſt call in the aid of verſe to my aſſiſtance: it may excuſe an occaſional temerity of expreſſion, if it do not inſpire me to do juſtice to the ſubject.

For on this ſubject, much as I admire Miſs Brudenell, I feel a preſentiment that my language may merit the charge of temerity. Frankneſs perhaps could not always commend an angel. And by her rejection of ſeveral (I think) unexceptionable propoſals, I fear Sylvia's diſtinctions in *this*, like her poor friend's in many other caſes, are too minute to be acceſſary to her happineſs.

W. Wanley Penson.

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

Briſtol.

BOUNTLY, I here ſend thee a copy of what I have written to Sylvia. Probably thou wilt not commend the poetry, but thou wilt diſcover my heart in it. Will not Sylvia diſcover it too? Is there developed any thing I ought to conceal? Tell me if there be a paſſage from whence ſhe can gather offence. I have been as circumſpect as poſſible, yet am afraid I have not ſucceeded. I would not loſe her friendſhip for the deareſt conſideration. Thoſe I can call friends are few—let me not loſe one. The fitneſs of the incloſed for Sylvia's peruſal will be determined by thy opinion. Give it then with thy uſual frankneſs to

W. WANLEY PENSON.

TO

TO SYLVIA.

ON THE CHOICE OF A HUSBAND.

THO' ſhrouded in a gloom of deep deſpair,
Eſtrang'd among mankind, I lag along
A dull unſocial life—altho' my barque,
A feeble veſſel, torn by fateful blaſts,
O'er time's perfidious waves unrudder'd rolls,
Heedleſsly driving whither lifts the ſtorm,
Or ſurging billow breaks; alike to me,
Alike to thoſe around me, float or ſink:
Yea, tho' a thick inappetence obſtructs
(Like foreign troops intrench'd in ſome ſack'd town)
Th' acceſſes of my ſubjugated breaſt,
And blocks out pleaſure—tho' my wounded boſom
Maim'd in its tend'reſt part, the nerve of love,
(Thence incapacitated to enjoy
Care's choiceſt ſweetner, joy's ſublimeſt reliſh,
Th' ecſtatic mixtion of two melting ſouls)
And by thoſe bands, ſoft nature's ligatures,
Fraternal, filial ties no more embrac'd,
Hopes not relief, nor wiſhes longer life;
Yet ſtill, with life, this boſom ſtill retains
The eſſence of that life, philanthropy;
Which ever quick'ning into friendly zeal,
Its glow inceſſant heaves my fainting breaſt,
And, thence a ſigh extruding, its collapſe

Alone, methinks, beats on the purple flood,
Which, warm'd thereby, now throbs thro' ev'ry pulſe,
And from extinction yet preſerves my being.

But, oh! if e'er a more exalted glow,
If e'er a quicker tide my heart dilate,
That glow—but pardon its preſuming phraſe,
Nor deem it means the moſt remote offence—
That glow, dear Sylvia, is inſpir'd by you.
Your welfare oft incites my pondering mind;
And oft beguiles and quickens the dull hours,
Which elſe with ſad, ſlow ſteps trace time's great wheel.

Long has my muſe, pregnant by kind intent,
A rude conception borne, and lab'ring oft
Eſſay'd to bring her burthen to the birth;
In vain till now, and now it proves abortive.
And well it may! for what more arduous were
Than to produce a trait of ſuch perfections
As your o'erweening fancy would admit,
The ſemblance of a partner fit for you?
What deep reſearcher, learn'd in nature's lore
(Unleſs, diſdaining all that e'er was human,
He ſoar occultly to ſome ſtellar clime)
Could e'er ſelect ſuch exquiſite materials,
Or mould them with ſuch niceneſs, as to claim
Your approbation of his labour'd model?
(And if ſo hard to form a mere deſign,
Oh hopeleſs ſearch, to ſeek for ſuch a man!)

Yes,

Yes, 'tis too much. The conſcious muſe, diſmay'd,
Here yields herſelf unequal to th' attempt;
And (more to be abaſh'd than Æſop's mountain,
Whoſe long parturience ended to its ſhame)
Thus ends her labour, by producing—nothing.
But tho' her raſh intent the muſe declines,
Yet would ſhe fain achieve the kindlier taſk
(That friendly taſk which Sylvia oft aſſumes)
Of counſel moſt affectionate—to you
Now diffidently offer'd, and ſubmiſs.

Thus then—Oh be not over exquiſite,
Nor e'er in man expect to find *perfection*.
For tho' you may deſerve the beſt of men,
The beſt of men have faults: and yet a man,
A frail, imperfect, inconſiſtent man,
May pleaſe a woman better than an angel;
For pleaſure ſprings from ſimilarity.
Yea, oft we ſee a very foible pleaſe,
Where worth too cloſely ſcrutiniz'd has fail'd;
For, rais'd too high, expectance can grow dizzy,
Ev'n ſo, that error ſhall ſeem excellence.
(Hence why ſo frequently a *virtuoſo*
Is faſcinated of an imperfection.)
And 'tis the fault of either ſex, to raiſe
Their expectation previouſly ſo high,
That nought but fancy in a dream can match it.
Then what a pang the viſionary feels,

When waking certainty the curtain draws,
And ſhews what fancy varniſh'd—human frailty
But thank kind heaven, who, to our fate propitious,
Decreed perfection not a requiſite
To human happineſs; which elſe, alas!
Had ne'er diſplay'd itſelf in hymen's train.
For where's the mortal being who can claim
The palm of rectitude?—I flatter none,
Or here I ſurely had excepted *you*.

Sylvia! to ſee you bleſt in happy wedlock,
Would yield my heart delectable ſenſations:
But growing from perfection if you ſeek
The gentle bleſſing, there you'll be deceiv'd.

Where can it then be found? Inſpect yourſelf;
Conſider firſt the bias of your mind,
Your conſtitutional propenſities;
Thence trace a chart, which, guiding you, may lead you
Within its culture: then explore your heart,
Examine its contents; and there you'll find,
Howe'er clos'd up in its conceal'd receſſes,
An apt eſſential, by prevenient nature
Deſign'd to vivify the latent bliſs;
And which ere now, if ſuffer'd to diffuſe,
Had haply quicken'd its congenial germen,
And made you rich in conjugal felicity.

Yes, Sylvia, 'tis a parity of mind,

Acting

Acting and acted on by gentle love,
That hymeneal happineſs produces.
But, mark me! active love, howe'er intenſe,
Or paſſive love *alone*, howe'er endur'd,
Is, and muſt ever be, love unproductive:
For the bliſs ſprings from reciprocity.
Beſides, what fire but unſupplied decays?
Whilſt love, from thoſe we love, exalts a flame,
Like oil ſtill pouring on the glowing embers.

Yet, ſtill, what qualities may juſt accord
With the identic tenor of your mind,
Remains the queſtion, and remains unanſwer'd;
Nor dares the muſe the topic e'er reſume.
Here you alone muſt judge; in you alone
The right of judgment lies; to interfere
Were rudeſt arrogance, the groſſeſt inſult.

Nature, all bounteous, has endow'd you richly
With intellectuals; doubtleſs richly too
Endow'd with tender paſſions—*theſe* to taſte,
Thoſe rather to ſelect, the ſweets of life.
Let reaſon then, affection in her hand,
Walk forth to hymen's feaſt; and where ſhe caters,
Let not affection too much play the maiden,
But looſen ſoothly to the ſoft enjoyment.
For reaſon (this the muſe admits unqueſtion'd)
To the peculiar palate of her inmate,
Thro' long acquaintance, cannot be a ſtranger.

And

And truly reaſon were beſide herſelf,
To point, for an enjoyment, to diſguſt.

Let then your hand be given by affection,
But reaſon firſt directing where to yield it:
For reaſon, ſuffer'd to perform her office,
Will be aware to whom the precious gift
Affection grant—aware the bluſt'ring blood,
Whoſe ſoul is in his fiſt; aware the brute,
With heart as ſordid as his love is ſenſual;
The fop (Narciſſus of the preſent day)
Whoſe *ſelf* engroſſing his entire attention,
Spares none for other object; and the fool,
Empty alike if bloating or abroach:
But moſt aware the knave, who, Proteus like,
Aſſumes all ſhapes that ſuit with his deſigns.

Thus far adventurous, wafted with a wiſh
For Sylvia's welfare, has the muſe preſum'd;
Tho', were that wiſh fulfill'd, perhaps I loſe,
For ever loſe, an amiable friend.
Ev'n ſo? what then? I've queſtion'd with my ſoul;
And tho' 'tis hard to part with thoſe we love,
This ſoul ſhould ne'er repine while you were happy.

But till you love (believe th' experienc'd muſe),
Until you love, you have but half exiſted,
Your finer faculties ſtill lying dormant:
For other joys, howe'er they warm the breaſt,

Yet

Yet other joys no more with this can vie,
Than with the ſun's bright blaze a taper's gleam.

Love's the grand elixir of human life,
Balm for its woes, and nectar to its feaſt!
Oh how to its viciſſitudes adapted
Is mutual confidence betwixt two ſouls,
United by conſenting ſentiment!
Like doubled fires, it brightens every bliſs,
And ſmooths the cares, life's hourly undulations,
As oil, pour'd on the waters, ſmooths the wave.

But if my friend perſiſts to find a man
Without his foible, ere ſhe yield to love,
To this choice ſolace ſhe muſt live a ſtranger.

Sylvia, to you the very beſt of men
I moſt devoutly wiſh, and nothing more;
For more than man would make you miſerable,
Unleſs yourſelf were more than woman too.
But whilſt your fancy's ſtandard is the pitch
Of perfect rectitude, what earthly being,
Adviſ'd of his preſumption, e'er will dare
To proſecute th' achieving your regard?
None but the moſt fool-hardy thing in nature—
An ape accompliſh'd, or unconſcious aſs.

For, tho' I lov'd you with the warmeſt zeal,
The moſt intenſe deſire, the fierceſt flame,

And

And were I conſcious too that I poſſeſs'd
Every admir'd endowment of mere man,
Me ſhould that flame conſume ere this confeſſion
Should ſcape my cautious lips—"I love you, Sylvia:"
And, meaſuring others by myſelf, I judge.

But ſink your expectation to the level
Of human life; and then, of Adam's ſons,
No doubt but your diſcernment will ſelect one
Endow'd with gifts ſufficient to attract
Your tendereſt affection, or whoſe love
May recompenſe for all his imperfections.

And now the Muſe, about to cloſe her lay,
Entreats, if ſhe have touch'd a ſtring offenſive,
Her good intention with her fault be weigh'd
In candour's balance—conſcious of no motive,
Whether to counſel or expoſtulate,
But a ſolicitude for Sylvia's weal:
For ſhould ſhe ever (and erewhile a note,
Tho' ſlightly ſlurr'd, reſponded to *this* key,
"Such faſcination not impoſſible")—
Should Sylvia ever think perfection found,
And venture, ſo deceiv'd, in wedlock bands,
The charm illuſive *(then too ſoon)* diſſolving,
Would undeceive her, undeceiv'd *too late.*

W. WANLEY PENSON.

PENSON

PENSON *to his Friend* BOUNTLY.

Briſtol.

WELL, Bountly, I have been with Mr. D—— to his meeting, or chapel, as he calls it.

I am juſt returned therefrom; or rather from the houſe of his paſtor, where I ſpent ſome time.

Mr. D—— is of that ſect whom we have heard of under the name of *Moravians*; but who call themſelves *The United Brethren*; or, ſimply, *The Brethren.*

My curioſity was a good deal excited when I found among whom I had fallen; as the accounts I had heard of this ſect had been exceſſively contradictory: ſome exclaiming againſt them, as holding the moſt ſhocking principles; others ſetting them forth as the moſt perfect (yea, ſome, a quite perfect) pattern of chriſtianity, both in ſyſtem and practice. But I am every day

day more and more convinced that *wonders* in general are the diſcovery of *unſound* judgments; and the relaters of them, relaters of falſehoods.

Human nature, making a little allowance for cuſtom and education, is nearly every where the ſame.

This ſect, which has been badly repreſented, becauſe but little known, and becauſe to mere curioſity they affect an air of diſtance and myſteriouſneſs, hold no ſhocking principles that I can diſcover; neither, on the other hand, however applauded, are they yet perfected into ſaints: but, ſo far as I can judge, are good chriſtians, on the level of other good chriſtians; and perhaps a little more deſerving the character of honeſt men than the million.

In their external they have ſomething of Quakeriſm, but not ſtarched *quite* ſo ſtiffly. They affect ſomething more conceding, and leſs peculiar in their converſation too, than the friends; but, like them, are enemies

mies to the extreme of dreſs, and the mutability of faſhion.

I do not know how far religion may be concerned in this: but it is certainly a piece of good policy; as it not only is a bar to extravagance among them, but prevents a ſtranger who may attend their aſſemblies from drawing any inference of poverty which may lead to contempt; as there is ſcarcely a poſſibility of diſtinguiſhing the gentleman from the pauper, or the lady from her maid.

And now methinks (as we are all eager to know that which it is difficult to obtain a knowledge of) my friend is curious to know ſomething more particular of theſe folks. Bountly, I have often obtruded very ſilly ſubjects on thy attention; but I ſhall venture the more readily on this, as I flatter myſelf it will be rather gratifying to thy curioſity, than a trial to thy patience.

I'll deſcribe thee, firſt, their public worſhip.

I went

I went to their meeting-houſe, or chapel, under the influence of two very different affections.

What I had ſeen in Mr. D——, and heard from him, excited in me an eſteem for theſe people. What I had previouſly heard alleged againſt them, made a conſiderable abatement.

I entered the meeting, where the moſt ſolemn ſtillneſs prevailed, though the benches (and they admit no pews, as diſtinctions, they ſay, ſuit not with the character of brethren) were nearly full. No whiſpering, no nodding, no ogling, bowing, or cringing; yea, the cough was checked, and the ſneeze methought repreſſed, as by a charm; not to break which, the ſexton (or whom theſe people call the *ſervant*, and whoſe avocations frequently called him from one place to another) walked ſo on tip-toe as hardly to be heard. In ſhort, every thing was as awful as though a God had preſently been expected to fill the pulpit inſtead of a man.

I do not know how it may be with others, but on my own imagination I have always found that ſilence has had a greater effect, when uſed as an introduction to ſomething expected, than any thing elſe whatſoever; my mind, left without local employ, going out as it were, with all its powers, to meet its expectation, like citizens to ſwell a triumph.

Hence (by the way), as I *fancy* myſelf not ſingular in *this* affection, I have often wiſhed that the devotions in our eſtabliſhed church were performed with a liſtle more ſolemnity.

We ſhould neglect nothing whereby to lay hold of the attention of mankind, when the deſign is their amendment. And, whatever may be implied to the contrary, nothing can tend more to their detriment than ſuffering religion to fall into contempt.

A perſon in the palace of his ſovereign, and expecting every moment his preſence, certainly would not indulge himſelf in haw-

ing like a cat with a bone in its throat, or fidgeting like a monkey in a ſhow. And how much leſs ſo ought he then, when attending in the houſe emphatically denominated the houſe of God!

If I were writing to a clergyman, I would endeavour to ſtimulate him to attempt a reformation in this particular, by hinting that, was the ſervice performed with greater appearance of ſincerity in our church, there would be much fewer ſeparatiſts. But to return.

After this ſilence had continued about ten minutes, the organ ſwelled on my ear in a very ſolemn air. It was again ſilent. Thou knoweſt the effect muſic has on me. Now ſwelling on this awful ſilence, it wound my ſoul up to a pitch of what I can find no name for, but the contradictory one of ecſtatic melancholy. After a while, it again gently echoed through the attentive ſpace; and the tone riſing by degrees, uſhered in, from a door near the pulpit, a

venera-

venerable looking man in black, who approached the pulpit with a firm and ſolemn ſtep; and, having mounted it, ſat down a minute, as though for recollection; the organ ceaſing, and all again becoming ſo ſilent that you might have heard a feather fall.

My imagination was now ſo raiſed, that I could not help conſidering the miniſter (who certainly had an *antique* aſpect) as an *Origen* or an *Ignatius*.

What was this owing to? The preceding ſilence, and the ſolemnity of his introduction? I believe it was, principally:—yet why may not certain affections of the mind be *catching*, as well as certain affections of the body? The congregation in general, I dare ſay, thought their miniſter as great as either of the afore-mentioned fathers: and the prevalent idea, for the moment, impreſſed itſelf on me; though a perſon of a diſpoſition to drollery would rather perhaps have found ſomething in

him to have likened to a conjuror or quack-doctor.

But though I were capable of a facetious conception, I could by no means admit it in ſuch a ſituation: for as, in entering a place of worſhip, I ſhould conſider the intention for which it was ſet apart, without glancing ſcarcely at the weakneſs, or perhaps abſurdity, of the dedicators—my imagination would naturally raiſe, rather than debaſe, whoever might officiate, or whatever ceremony might be performed in it.

Beſides, my Bountly, amidſt the great variety of opinion that is, and has been, reſpecting religious worſhip, who can have the temerity to ſay, *mine* only is pleaſing to God—to that God who has inſpired into the ſoul of man univerſally, though under different modifications, the idea that he ought to be adored?

Who knows?—perhaps *diverſity* of *opinion*, though it accord not with our ſuperficial notions of the fitneſs of things, may nevertheleſs

holeſs be far from diſpleaſing to the object of adoration? Perhaps it is more diſpleaſing that man "darkly wiſe," when "dreſſed in a little brief authority," ſhould endeavour to force others to unity of ſentiment.

It muſt be ſo, becauſe it is waging war againſt nature; oppoſing the ſelf-evident intention of nature's God, who, infinite in the diverſity of his workmanſhip, has made no two things preciſely alike through the whole extent of creation.

Excuſe me if here I tell thee a ſhort ſtory. 'Tis ſeldom my mind is light enough for ſtory-telling.

The almanacs and newſpapers had predicted an ec ipſe of the ſun; and the ruſtics of a certain hamlet, in conſequence, aſſembled on the green, to obſerve the wonderful phænomenon, each of whom was anxious to diſcover the beſt method of obſervation.

A *mighty knowing one* repaired to a hillock, and declared *that* was the beſt me-

thod; "*for why*—whoever mounted the hillock, diminiſhed the diſtance between him and the object to be obſerved."

Another, *equally knowing*, repaired to a pool, to gaze at the reflection; pleading that, "though he could not be certain that his method diminiſhed the diſtance (though by the way he could not comprehend how the reflection could be farther from him than the water which cauſed it), yet he was ſure it had an advantage of the others, as it enabled him to contemplate the object with more eaſe."

A third, quite as ſagacious, produced a bit of looking-glaſs, and averred his ſcheme to be ſuperior to either of the others, "*by the reaſon* he could mount with it where he pleaſed, and place it in any direction."

Each of theſe knowing ones gained adherents, who held each others opinions in mutual contempt; whilſt the eyes of each and all were equally dazzled with the object they were gazing at.

The

The eclipſe was not yet begun; yet every party thought they had diſcovered its commencement and progreſs, each in a wonderful but different manner.

Preſently comes up a poor traveller; and hearing their amazing relations, "My friends," ſaid he, "I think ye are all wrong: the wonders you ſee are only in your own dazzled eyes; but I will put you in a method to diſcover the truth. Be only pleaſed to get me a bit of *glaſs* and a *candle*."

The articles were ſoon procured; though not without the aſtoniſhment of thoſe around, at the neceſſity of having a candle wherewithal to take a view of the ſun. But when they ſaw the uſe he put the candle to, in ſmoking the glaſs, they all burſt into a contemptuous peal of laughter. "Was ever any thing ſo ridiculous—that a man ſhould dim his eyes in order to ſee the clearer?"

"No matter," ſaid the traveller, applying the dimmed glaſs to his eye—"I am

now convinced you were all in the wrong: for the eclipſe is even now but beginning; and I can mark its progreſs with accuracy and eaſe through this dimmed glaſs, and that is more than you can do with your clear optics."

"Nay pray, Mr. Wiſeacre, then," replied the others, "to convince us you obſerve ſo nicely, even tell us what this eclipſe is?"

"What it is?—why—the devil wheeling the pope into the ſun, to give him a ſinge before roaſting, to be ſure. If you look, as I do, you may juſt now ſee the edge of the wheel of his barrow!"

So is it, my Bountly, in diſputes about religion.

Man, contemplating things beyond his comprehenſion, grows bewildered, and fancies he diſcovers wonders, which probably exiſt not but in his own imagination; yet condemns thoſe who, rejecting his extravagancies, are, like himſelf, weak enough to indulge their own.

Indeed there are certain truths to which we may aſſent, yet which were we to attempt to define, would moſt likely reduce us to concluſions as ridiculous as that of the poor traveller accounting for the eclipſe.

In ſhort, my friend, what can be decided in this affair? Perhaps little more than this: that he who, like the man with the ſmoked glaſs, views religion only with an eye ſo much enlightened as to diſcover his duty, without enquiring too nicely into the *how*, the *when*, and the *wherefore* ſuch duty was enjoined, is moſt likely to profit by its precepts.

This is a long digreſſion; but to return.

After the miniſter had ſat a minute or two, he roſe up, and all the congregation roſe with him. He then read a litany, very little unlike our church litany, and the people made the reſponſes: but the reading was frequently interrupted by ſinging. They are fond of ſinging: and there is ſomething ſolemn in the airs of their tunes;

tunes; though withal ſo odd, that I believe, to light and ſpirited minds, they cannot be always pleaſing. But I acknowledge it was otherwiſe with me. Their gentle plaintiveneſs (for they ſing, contrary to all ſinging I have ever heard in public worſhip, only in a kind of breathing tone) ſuited the languor of my ſoul; which however could not be affected by the ſentiments of their hymns, as their language was hardly intelligible to me.

The litany read, and the ſinging ended, the miniſter proceeded to his ſermon. It was a plain diſcourſe. The point principally inſiſted on (and I am told it is almoſt the ſole ſubject that occupies their pulpits), was the merits of the *Saviour* (a term theſe people, to a degree of peculiarity, always apply to the Redeemer of the world), and the neceſſity of a human ſoul being quickened to a peculiar ſenſe of the miſeries of its fallen ſtate, in order to induce it to ſolicit and obtain a ſhare of that happineſs which

which *the Saviour* is ever ready on ſuch conditions to beſtow.

He touched on good works but ſlightly, obſerving that they would follow of courſe when the heart was purified.

As to the method of reclaiming the guilty by denunciations of vengeance, it here had no place: and I find it makes, in general, no part of the rhetorical ſyſtem of this ſect; who rather endeavour to allure mankind to virtue, by repreſenting in the moſt glowing figures the immeaſurable love of God, in appointing and effecting a propitiation for man.

Indeed, Bountly, there is ſomething faſcinating in this method, and on ſome conſtitutions I do not doubt but it has the deſired effect. But how far it is adapted to the feelings of the world at large, experience evinces: for theſe people are far from numerous, compared with the popularity of ſome other ſects; though I ſhould eſtimate the virtue produced by ſuch a conſideration

tion to be of a finer water than that produced by fear, and conſequently more to be relied on. One would certainly make a diſtinction between a ſervant who obeyed one from a dread of puniſhment, and one who obeyed through love.

Sects, though in general we conſider them as blots in the eſcutcheon, are, I think, in reality of ſervice to chriſtianity (conſidering it as a ſyſtem of theology once delivered to our forefathers in purity), and the riſe of new ſects attended with advantage: for taking the doctrine of the Apoſtles for a ſtandard, what wild deviations do we find in every ſucceeding age! even ſuch, that probably *their* ſyſtem had been long ſince quite forſaken, but that ſome ſchiſmatics (as they have ever been called) ſtarted up from time to time, and revived ſome neglected though perhaps fundamental principle of it.

Inſtances of this have been ſo frequent, that it would be tedious to repeat them.

Men poſſeſſed of religious emoluments diſlike

diſlike this doctrine: but as I prefer truth to party, and general utility to private intereſt, I would only aſk theſe men where had been the reformation but for ſchiſm, and where our own church but for a ſpirit of queſtioning the authority of pre-eſtabliſhments?

Let then enquiry be encouraged; for though ſects may be thereby increaſed, yet there will ſtill be a majority who will adhere but the firmer, if truth be diſcovered in an eſtabliſhed theory: but let that religion which cannot bear inveſtigation ſink into its original nothingneſs.

Poetry, ſtatuary, architecture, &c. many hundred years ago, were carried nearer perfection perhaps than any thing we now can boaſt; yet who will deny that we are better ſkilled in the fine arts now than our forefathers were a *few centuries* back? And why are we ſo? Not merely from new inventions; but from a frequent examining, and daily reviving, of rules exemplified in the works

works of thoſe whom, to diſtinguiſh from the intervening ages, we call the ancients. May not the ſame be ſaid of religion? And may not a ſectary juſtify himſelf on ſimilar grounds?

But this ſect of whom I am now treating, will not acknowledge themſelves ſeparatiſts: for, by their own accounts, it ſhould ſeem that they have been a diſtinct church almoſt from the times of the apoſtles; an honour to which no denomination of chriſtians in Europe, that I know of, beſides, makes pretenſion, except the Greek and Roman churches.

After ſermon Mr. D—— was ſent for, and whom I accompanied into the miniſter's apartment, which adjoined the chapel; where one queſtion leading to another, the miniſter at length, fully to ſatisfy my curioſity, put into my hand ſeveral tracts, ſome relative to the antiquity, and others to the doctrine and diſcipline, of his church. Herein I found they made their ſyſtem of

Greek

Greek origin; and boaſted of having ever preſerved it pure as at preſent, in ſpite of the perſecutions, cavils, and overbearings of Rome.

How far the conſtitution of the *preſent* brethren, as ſet forth by the late Count Zinzendorf, agrees with that of the *ancient* brethren of Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, &c. ſome of whoſe paſtors lent a hand towards perfecting the Engliſh reformation, I leave to be determined by thoſe deeper ſkilled in eccleſiaſtical affairs than myſelf: but for the orthodoxy of the *modern* I found in the above-mentioned tracts a variety of weighty vouchers; conſiſting of letters from many proteſtant Biſhops, Archbiſhops, Profeſſors, &c. moſtly in Latin; and, among the reſt, one from a late Archbiſhop of Canterbury.—What an effect has *names* on our weak intellects! Perhaps Ben the barber, at G——, was furniſhed with as acute natural parts as the moſt ſagacious of theſe on the liſt: yet had the orthodoxy of Moravianiſm

ravianiſm come to me with his recommendation, I ſhould involuntarily have miſtruſted it; but ſeeing theſe great ſignatures, I was almoſt perſuaded to allow it without examination.

But what ſtrikes one moſt at firſt ſight, as a thing extraordinary, is the regularity of the prieſthood among theſe brethren; and the more ſo as they are not now (nor can I learn they ever were) in any country a church eſtabliſhed by civil authority. But that eccleſiaſtical authority can exiſt (perhaps as far as it ought) without the exerciſe of civil power, we have a proof in this ſect; the degrees of whoſe prieſthood (which are as numerous I believe as in any prieſthood, conſiſting of provincial biſhops, metropolitans (or what amounts to the meaning), deacons, preſbyters, and every order of reverentials) poſſeſs, it ſeems, each one within the circle of their connection, its proper influence, fully and undiſputedly. And here methinks, Bountly, turns out a bone

bone for human policy to pick. The Quakers, in conſtituting themſelves a body of chriſtians, rejected a prieſthood altogether; the Moravians, on the contrary, ſeem to have picked up and edged into their ſcheme every fritter of it: yet both appear to be equally a peaceable, connected, and well regulated people; though both equally tenacious of not ſubmitting the deciſion of their internal affairs to powers external to their own conſtitutions.

Next after the *ſimplicity* (by which they generally mean the purity) of their doctrine, this ſect ſeems moſtly to value itſelf on its *epiſcopal ſucceſſion*; its pretenſions this way being as high as to the apoſtles.

But ſuch kind of conſiderations I eſtimate (as I would all titles which have not viſible effects aſſigned them) merely as a feather in the cap of the hero, which cuts a figure, and attracts the curſory eye, but adds nothing to the wearer's ſtature or his proweſs.

However, from what I ſaw and heard, theſe people ſeemed to me to prove their epiſcopal ſucceſſion as clearly as moſt others who attempt ſo to do.

But, Bountly, thou art not ignorant what a cloud hangs over the firſt centuries of chriſtian hiſtory: and if nothing more is to be hoped for than the tracing a ſucceſſion of men who have conferred on each other (and often perhaps without conſidering qualifications) the title of biſhops—uſeleſs to mankind, I think, will be his labour who ſhall attempt to penetrate it.—Adieu.

W. WANLEY PENSON.

END OF VOL. I.